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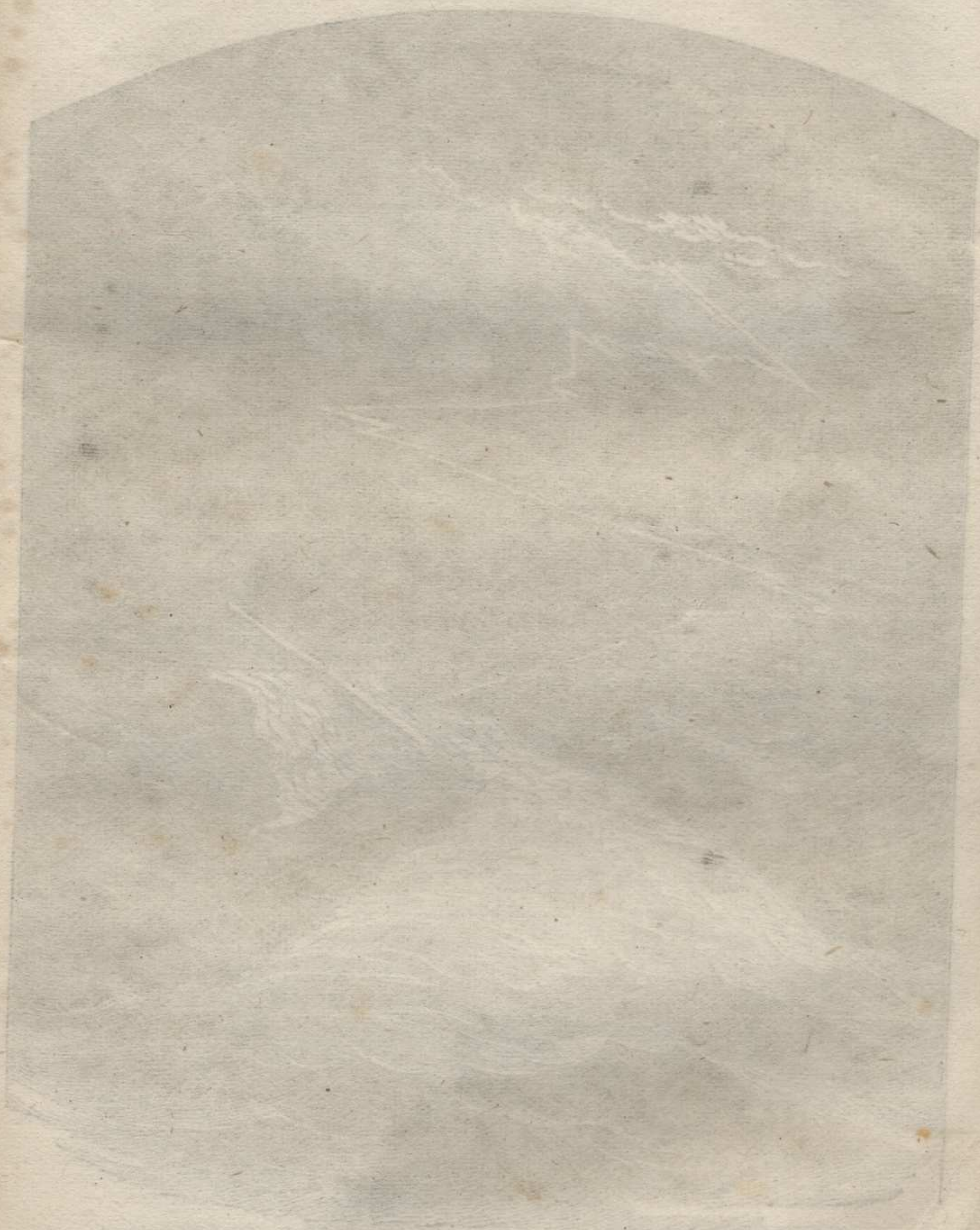
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States for the Southern District of New York.

CAST AWAY





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OR

THE ISLAND BRIDE.

A ROMANCE OF THE "ENCHANTED ISLES."

BY ROGER STARBUCK,

AUTHOR OF "ON THE DEEP," "GOLDEN HARPOON," ETC.

NEW YORK:
BEADLE AND COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,
118 WILLIAM STREET.

C A S T
; Y A W A

THE ISLAND BRIDE

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(No. 90.)

BY ROGER STARRBOR

AUTHOR OF "THE DREAM," "GOLDEN HARBOR," ETC.

NEW YORK:
BEADLE AND COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,
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CAST AWAY.

CHAPTER I.

ADrift AND ASHORE.

It was at that witching hour, after sundown, when the crimson tints, yet resting upon sky and wave, begin to blend with the twilight shadows, that two whale-ships—the Reindeer and Southampton—met in the vast watery wilderness of the South Pacific Ocean. The customary hails being exchanged, the captain of the Reindeer requested the other skipper to come aboard—an invitation which he promptly accepted. His main-yard was hauled aback; before the two vessels had drifted twenty fathoms apart, his starboard boat dropped into the water, and, impelled by five stout oarsmen, it was soon alongside the Reindeer. Its crew, with the exception of one man, who remained in charge of the boat, then sprung on deck and were cordially received—the skipper by the other captain, and his men by the foremast hands. Sounds of mirth, proceeding from the forecastle, soon proclaimed that all hands were enjoying themselves in that quarter; while, in the after part of the vessel, the wistful helmsman, looking down through the cabin skylight, saw the two captains comfortably seated in the state-room, chatting, laughing and smoking their pipes over well-filled glasses. The first mate, Mr. Dumps, a long-limbed native of Sag Harbor, not having been invited to join the two worthies below, was pacing the quarter-deck with impatient strides, longing for an opportunity to vent his ill-humor. This was soon afforded him, when, on glancing over the weather-rail, he discovered that the man remaining in the boat had not yet been relieved by one of the Reindeer's crew. Such a breach of nautical courtesy might have angered a better tempered man than Dumps, who, hurrying forward, thrust his face down the scuttle, his eyes gleaming like coals of fire, in the light of the forecastle lamp.

"Below there!" he shouted, in a voice of suppressed rage. "Stop that racket a moment, will ye?"

The sounds of mirth were immediately hushed; several men advanced and glared up at the mate as if he were some ghostly apparition.

"Harmon Weldon!" continued Dumps, in a fierce, husky voice. "I want Weldon!"

"He's asleep, sir!"

"Well, blast your lubberly heads, wake him up then, and be quick about it, too!"

The man withdrew, and a minute after, a fine-looking young sailor of twenty-one appeared beneath the opening, and quietly turned a pair of large blue eyes toward the angry face above.

"Ay, ay, blast ye! So you've got up, have ye? What right, I'd like to know, had *you* to go to sleep! Answer me that if you can!"

"You need hardly ask that question, since I have been deprived of my watch below for three nights, because I accidentally spilt a few drops of tar. It was natural I should feel sleepy."

"But who *told* you that you might go below?" thundered Dumps.

"The second mate. He also told me that I might turn in."

"Well, now, jist come up here at once, and relieve that Portuguese in the Southampton's boat; and mark ye—if I ever catch you asleep again without *my* orders, I shall have you 'seized up' in the mizzen-rigging and flogged within an inch of your life!"

Harmon, who was a spirited, quick-tempered youth, was about to make some angry retort, when the mate, hearing the captain calling him, quickly left the scuttle, and sought the cabin. The young man then came on deck, and making his way to the boat, relieved the Portuguese, who gladly hastened to join his shipmates in the forecastle. Seating himself upon the after-thwart, Weldon fell into a gloomy reverie. The unjust tyranny exercised against him by the mate had become almost insupportable. For some such trifling accident as that already mentioned, Dumps was in the habit of depriving him of his watch below, and of setting him to perform disagreeable tasks. Never, until now, however, had he hinted at

flogging; and as the youth reflected upon the threat, he clenched his fists, while a dangerous light in his eyes betokened that such punishment might prove difficult of accomplishment. His frank, manly bearing and generous disposition had won him the friendship of his shipmates, who were ready to join him in case of any affray between him and the officers. Knowing this, and not wishing to get his chums into trouble on his account, he had thus far performed the many unjust and heavy tasks imposed upon him, without a murmur. He was an excellent sailor; in fact, the mate's only reasons for disliking him were, that he was reputed to be well educated and something of a doctor; having studied the theory and practice of medicine for two years or more, with his only living relative, an uncle.

Dumps had unconsciously betrayed his secret to the man at the wheel, one morning, just after he had set Weldon to work knocking the rust off one of the anchors.

"Ay, ay," he was heard to mutter, as he fixed his spiteful eyes upon the young man, "it was jist sich an 'edicated' lubber as that, a doctor or a humbug, it don't matter which, seein' as both mean about the same thing—who cut me out of the only gal I ever loved; and having sworn eternal vengeance ag'in' the whole tribe, I shall sartainly parsecute this fellow to the best of my ability."

This speech, which had been faithfully reported to him by the helmsman, now recurred to Harmon's mind, and his anger having by this time subsided, he became sensible of a feeling of pity for the rough but weak-minded mate. His thoughts soon glided into a different channel; his reveries became somehow in unison with the long, lazy splash of the waves against the ship's side, with the creaking of yards and masts. Night was around him; the rising moon not having yet emerged from a thick bank of clouds in the east, the gloom was almost impenetrable. A fresh breeze from the north and east urged the Reindeer through the water at the rate of two knots, notwithstanding that her main-yard was aback; and about a quarter of a mile to windward, Harmon could distinguish the lantern aboard the Southampton, gleaming like a blood-shot eye through the darkness. While still watching it, a feeling of drowsiness, consequent upon his not having

slept for three nights, stole over him. In vain he struggled against it; nature stoutly asserted her rights, and, falling back in the stern-sheets, he dropped into a deep slumber. When he woke, the moon, sailing high in mid-heaven, first greeted his sight, betokening that he had slept for many hours. Wondering why no person had waked him, he rose to a sitting posture, and glanced round him with astonishment. The waves of the vast ocean, partially obscured by a fleecy veil of mist, rolled clashing around him; he saw the sky and the dimly-shining stars; heard the scream of a solitary sea-bird as it wheeled above his head; but neither of the two ships was visible! He was alone—adrift upon the wide wilderness of waters! He sprung to his feet; he strained his eyes, looking in every direction; he listened if he might hear the creaking of a block, the flapping of canvas, but all in vain. He saw nothing—heard nothing that could give him a clue to the whereabouts of the vessels. To ascertain, if possible, how he had become separated from the ship, he now hauled in the warp by which the boat had been attached to it. He found the upper part of a rotten belaying-pin in the hitch, at the end, and needed no further explanation. The pin, to which the rope had been made fast, had given way while he was asleep, unseen by any person, and the boat, as a natural consequence, had drifted off in the darkness. Hours had probably elapsed before the boat was missed; the search for it had been unsuccessful; it had been passed in the gloom.

Luckily, the mast had not been taken out of the little vessel; and “stepping” it, Harmon now set his mainsail, and directed the boat before the wind in the faint hope of overtaking the ship, which, he doubted not, was lying-to somewhere ahead. The fog thickened around him as he proceeded, and sky and ocean were soon obscured. On over the wild waters, with the spray dashing over both gunwales, flew the lone boat with its solitary occupant. Long and weary hours passed; tired with watching and shouting, his garments drenched, his arms aching with their protracted hold of the steering-oar, Harmon leaned against the loggerhead, watching the gray dawn as it crept into the fog. It grew lighter every moment, the wind freshened, the mist rolled away from the sea, and the red light of the rising sun gleamed far along the upheaving

waves. Starting upright, the young sailor swept the horizon with a scrutinizing glance. But no speck, no sign of a sail was to be seen. The ocean mocked him with its hoarse roar, while the clouds, piled up in the west, looking like rocks and caverns lined with gold and fire, seemed to bid him prepare for the ethereal regions above. Notwithstanding the prospect of hardship and suffering before him, he felt, as he gazed upon the bright panorama of shifting wave and cloud, a wild throb of pleasure penetrating his soul. While there was a good boat between him and the fathomless deep, he would not despair. He still nourished the hope of falling in with his own vessel, or some other craft, before the pangs of thirst and hunger should come upon him. There was a keg half filled with fresh water, together with a bag containing a few sea-biscuits, in the stern-sheets, and these, with a little care, could be made to supply his wants for a couple of days.

The sun had passed the meridian before he ventured to touch his scanty stock of provisions. Then he took one of the biscuits from the bag, and was lifting it to his lips, when the thought struck him that it would taste better seasoned with salt water. Whalemén, when away from their ships in boats, often prepare their biscuits for eating in this manner; and as Neptune charges nothing, it is a cheap way of improving one's meal when it consists of crackers so hard that they sometimes resist the blow of a hatchet. Accordingly, our hero thrust his biscuit into the water, and having soaked it to his satisfaction, was on the point of withdrawing it, when it was most unceremoniously snapped from his grasp. Much astonished, he peered over the gunwale and saw an enormous shark making off with the prize in its mouth! He seized a boat-hook, but before he could use it, the thief dove out of sight, leaving him to lament a loss which, in his present situation, he could but ill afford. Nevertheless, he congratulated himself that the monster had not succeeded in grasping his hand, which had evidently prompted the attack. Further reflection almost forced him to the conclusion that the theft had been brought about by Providence, to prevent his feeling too soon the cravings of thirst, which would have been excited by the salt water, and have prompted him to partake too largely of the scanty contents of the boat keg. He took

another biscuit, and breaking it, contented himself with a part, resolving not to eat the other portion until night. Having seasoned his meal with a draught of fresh water, he filled and lighted his pipe, which, together with matches, he always carried about with him in his jacket pocket; and leaning against his steering-oar, as he puffed the fragrant smoke, Harmon felt quite contented and happy. Being blessed with a lively imagination, he depended for enjoyment less upon outward circumstances, than upon the workings of his own mind. Quietly reveling in pleasant fancies of his own creating, the thought had often occurred to him that whole years spent in solitude, far away from the haunts of his fellow-men, would prove far from burdensome to him. Perhaps his views upon this subject might have been modified by his mingling with natures congenial with his own; but these he had never found. His lot on shore had thus far been cast among men who, sneering at the winning simplicity of true refinement, formed their estimate of their neighbors' importance by the quality of their coats, their furniture, or the amount of their real estate! This limited experience of mankind, together with his warm imagination and love of adventure, rendered the solitude of his present situation any thing but disagreeable to him. Hopefully relying upon Providence to rescue him from the perils ahead, he watched the gorgeous clouds in the west toward which his boat was speeding, and built castles in the air. Several hours were passed in this manner, when he noticed that the clouds were growing darker, and spreading far along the sky, while the wind, freshening every moment, sounded the warning notes of a gale. The seas, rising higher and higher, soon began to break over the boat's weather gunwale in such quantities as compelled him to take in his mainsail. He was obliged to transfer the biscuits to his pocket, to keep them dry, and to lash the articles in the boat to the thwarts, to prevent them from being washed overboard. Then, having carefully baled out the little craft, he managed his steering-oar so as to drift before the wind and waves. By this time, the sun being obscured, a dreary gloom hung like a pall over the ocean. The gale came sweeping, howling along, tossing the waters wildly, and sending the foam flying from the crests of the lofty billows in stringy masses, like

manes of white horses streaming from their necks. The boat was violently tossed hither and thither; its occupant was soon obliged to use great exertion to prevent it from being swamped. Roaring, crashing and hissing, the "seas" broke around him, now carrying his craft into a perfect caldron of foaming, seething waters, and now hurling it into some watery valley, where it rolled with its lee gunwale submerged.

At length night darkened around him, but the imperiled sailor dared not close his eyes lest his boat should roll over; many sleepless hours were before him. Far and near, the phosphor-gleam of the foam shed a weird light through the gloom; myriads of little stars seemed dancing upon the crests of the waves. But little opportunity was afforded *him* of admiring the scene; he was continually baling the boat with one hand, while he steered with the other. At midnight, however, the gale began to abate, and by morning, the wind was blowing moderately, though there was still a heavy swell. As he glanced eagerly around him, he saw a faint blue line far to the westward, which he at first took for a cloud; but soon after, he became satisfied that it was land! With a shout of joy he set his mainsail, and was soon bounding over the waves in the direction of the isle. In the course of a few hours, he was near enough to distinguish a reef, and, about half a mile beyond, the white, sandy beach, fringed with slender cocoanut trees. A light mist covering the higher land, partially screened its luxuriant foliage from his view, but he saw enough to convince him that he was approaching one of those paradisaical gardens in the ocean wilderness, so often encountered by the mariners of the South Pacific. Discovering an opening in the reef, he passed through it, and found himself in water much more smooth than that outside of the rocky line. In a short time his boat's keel struck the beach, and having furled his sail and unshipped his mast, he sprung ashore. Pulling the boat as far up as he could, the happy sailor fastened the warp to the trunk of a cocoanut, and started off to explore the island. He wandered among orange groves and bread-fruit trees, he saw clusters of ripe bananas gleaming like golden bugles in the green shrubbery, his feet came into contact with curious and beautiful flowers, birds of variegated plumage fluttered around him, warbling such notes as had

never before greeted his ears. Moving on, he passed through valleys watered by purling streams; he ascended green hills, clumbered over rocks, and explored their mossy caverns; but he saw no trace of any human being; no sign to show that the island had ever before been visited by one of his species. At length he came to a small, limpid lake, fringed with blue and white lilies, and abounding with schools of little fish, which, alarmed by the sound of his footsteps, swam rapidly hither and thither beneath the liquid surface. He threw himself upon the grassy bank, and a sensation of wild joy thrilled his frame.

“A perfect Garden of Eden,” he muttered. “I could not have imagined a fairer spot, and I doubt that I shall ever care to leave it. The fruits of the trees and plants, the fish of the lake and sea, will afford me plenty of food. As to shelter—I can build me a hut of boughs and trees to protect me from the rain. May the good God be praised for enabling me to reach this pleasant paradise.”

Having made a hearty meal of a large bunch of bananas, and washed it down with the pure water from the lake, he proceeded at once to provide a habitation. With the boat-hatchet he chopped down a number of small trees, about four inches in circumference, and formed them into stakes, six feet in length and sharpened at the ends. These he drove into the soft ground, arranging them in the shape of a horse-shoe; after which, with a sailor's art, he framed them with a network of twigs and branches lopped from bread-fruit and cocoanut trees. This network he improved by filling up the interstices with leaves, grass and reeds. The roof he formed of similar materials, although he was more particular in its construction than he had been in that of the other parts of the shelter. When it was completed, he threw several bailers-full of water upon it, to make sure that rain could not penetrate it. The result of the experiment was satisfactory; the roof being sloping, the water ran down the broad leaves with which it was thatched in little drops, and fell to the ground outside of the hut. This suggested to our hero's mind the idea of a trench, and he at once set himself to work. With much labor, using his hatchet and a sharpened stake—he succeeded in surrounding his habitation with a trench about half a foot in depth, and

having an outlet which would cause the water to run off into a neighboring valley. By this time the shades of night were closing around him; and having plucked some more bananas, he crawled into his palace and enjoyed his second meal of fruit. Afterward he lay awake several hours, watching the stars and indulging pleasing reveries; the moon was high above the cocoanuts before he dropped into his first slumber upon the island.

The next morning he sailed on a "coast survey" in his boat. Cruising around the isle, he discovered that it was about two miles in length and about half a mile wide. It was nearly surrounded by a reef, part of which was more than a mile from the beach. After he had examined it to his satisfaction, and plucked from it several pieces of curiously shaped coral, together with some beautiful shells, he returned to the point from which he had started, and secured his boat. Mounting a hill, he swept the ocean with a scrutinizing glance; but no sign of a sail was to be seen.

"I am glad of it," he muttered, as he moved toward his hut. "I do not wish to be annoyed by troublesome visitors. Solitude in a place such as this will never become a burden to me."

He procured his hatchet, and passed the rest of the day in improving his hut, and manufacturing fishing-poles and lines, the latter being made of twisted threads of cocoanut husks. He also fashioned a few rude fishhooks, with some pieces of iron taken from the boat.

CHAPTER II.

THE WRECK.

PASSING over a period of several months, we still find our young sailor contented and even happy in his solitary retreat. Thus far he had employed himself in improving his little habitation, and in rambling and coasting about the island, while indulging his pleasant reflections. On several different

occasions he had seen a sail, but had felt no desire to signal it, as he was still free from any longings for the society of his fellow-creatures.

It was the afternoon of the ninetieth day since his arrival at the island, when the ocean was convulsed by one of those terrific gales which seldom visit the Pacific. The sky was covered with masses of dark clouds which the wind seemed to tear into many fragments as it drove them furiously along; while below, the sea was fairly beaten down flat by the force of the tempest. One broad mass of hissing, boiling foam, almost hidden by careering flakes of spray, it lay groaning as hoarsely, as fiercely, as a chained lion, beaten by the lash of a tyrant. Some of the trees upon the higher parts of the island were torn up by the roots, and sent thundering into the glens and valleys below. The long reeds upon the sides of the hills were crushed as if a mighty giant had trampled upon them, and the poor flowers were torn from their stems and carried away from their native isle, to drift and wither in the sea. Gazing far over the wild waters, and much impressed by their singular appearance, Harmon stood upon a little elevation, watching the effects of the tempest until night closed around him. Then he sought his hut and tried to sleep. But the booming of the vast ocean, together with the roaring of the wind among the trees, long prevented him from closing his eyes. At last, however, he fell into a doze, from which he was roused soon after midnight, by the crash of a stately cocoanut as it fell within a few yards of his hut. He rose and made his way to the summit of a little hill, overlooking the ocean. The storm had not yet abated; the wind blew so violently that he could scarcely keep his balance; though fifty yards from the beach yet he could feel the salt spray flying into his face. Far and near the phosphor-gleam of the sea shed a strange, weird light through the gloom; the eyes of thousands of little wicked demons seemed to twinkle all over the moaning deep. But Harmon fancied, as he gazed over the broad waste of waters to leeward, that he could see another, a far different light, gleaming at intervals in the shadowy distance. It looked like a little red ball of flame rising and dipping with the heaving of the sea, and he promptly concluded that it was a ship's lantern. He was convinced of this, when a faint flash,

suddenly lighting the distant waves, was followed by the dull, heavy booming of a gun! He started and eagerly listened for a repetition of the sound. Nor had he long to wait; a minute after the first report, the flash was again seen, and again that smothered peal was borne to his ears.

"A vessel firing minute-guns; a vessel in distress!" he exclaimed, as he rushed toward the beach. "God help her! God help her struggling crew! It is a fearful night, and in this hurricane she must soon go down. I will away in my boat and see what I can do; though I much doubt that I shall ever come back! Ay! ay! perhaps I never shall; and if I don't, may the next inhabitant of this island be more fortunate! Well, well, there's no time to lose, and I hope Providence will enable me to save a few of yonder brave fellows. While there's a chance of *that*, Harmon, you are a coward if you don't put out to sea!"

His boat was launched by this time, and he sprung into it. To "step" his mast and set his sail in that tempest would have been impossible; even had he succeeded in doing so, the canvas would soon have been torn to tatters, and the slender spar snapped in twain. He could only keep the light, craft before the gale, and allow it to drift along with wind and current. He must trust to chance to reach that dim light, flickering far ahead upon the stormy ocean. He was now, as nearly as he could judge, directly in a line with it, and he therefore used every exertion to keep the boat steadily upon her course. It was carried with great velocity past the western shore of the island; very soon it had left the southern extremity astern, and was shooting on toward the open sea. And now, for the third time, he saw the flash and heard the report from the wreck; he even fancied that he distinguished the stump of a mast lighted by the momentary gleam. The wind howled and shrieked—the sea roared and hissed as if in mockery of that peal of distress. Clouds of foam-flakes were tossed like drifting snow all over the wild ocean. The garments of the daring seaman were soon drenched; the water in the boat was already above his ankles, and the frail bows were often so deeply buried, that it seemed as if the little vessel must soon be swamped. Steering with one hand and bailing out with the other, Harmon struggled manfully with

the tempest. The level surface presented by the sea was all that saved the boat; otherwise it would not have been afloat five minutes after leaving the beach.

Drifting on swiftly before the gale, he finally gained the open ocean, and was enabled to make out the dim outline of a shattered mast and jib-boom directly ahead. He was on the point of shouting encouragement to those aboard the wreck, when every vestige of the latter suddenly vanished from his sight. He heard, at the same instant, the despairing cries of the struggling crew, growing fainter each moment; and he feared that he would arrive too late to be of any service. Borne rapidly on, however, he soon beheld in the sea ahead of him several dark objects, which he believed were human forms. He was certain of this when he obtained a nearer view; several persons were clinging to a spar, to which they were lashed. Two of them—he judged by their cries—were women, and, resolving to rescue *them* first, he directed his boat, by skillful maneuvering, alongside of the spar. Holding on to one of the ropes depending from it with his left hand, he assisted the females into his craft with the other. Two men, clinging to oars of a boat, which evidently had been launched but swamped, were helped next, and in a few minutes all were in the boat.

“Saved! saved! Thank God!” exclaimed one of the women, in a voice that trembled like the reverberations of a silver bell; “and oh! is there no hope for the others? Can we not rescue more lives?”

The scintillant light of the sea revealed the sweet oval face and soft, dark eyes of a young girl of seventeen. As he encountered her pleading glance, Harmon thought he had never before seen a countenance so lovely.

“We will try,” he answered, in reply to her last question, “but I doubt if we shall meet with any success. If each of you will take your oars, my friends,” he added, addressing the men, “we will see what we can do.”

The seamen, having clung to their oars with their sailors’ instinct, cheerfully complied, and Harmon directed his craft toward a struggling form which he discerned a few yards ahead. It proved to be that of a passenger, who, as soon as he was drawn into the boat, clasped his hands and with a

fervent voice, thanked God for his preservation. By this time, the little vessel was so far to leeward of the spot near which the wreck had gone down, that all the efforts of the three men to save the few whose cries were still faintly heard in the din of the storm, were of no avail. In such a raging tempest it was impossible to make any headway to windward; on the contrary, the boat was now carried far to leeward beyond the sound of those despairing voices.

"They are lost!" cried Harmon. "We can do nothing for them!"

"May God have mercy upon their souls!" exclaimed the individual who had been rescued last, "and receive them in that bright land where there is neither weeping nor wailing!"

The speaker was a tall, thin, meek-looking, middle-aged man, dressed in black, and wearing a white neck-cloth. His remark was accompanied with a glance toward the elder of the two females, who, notwithstanding all the efforts of the young girl to console her, was sobbing, and moaning, and wringing her hands in a distracted manner. A portion of her attire was rather singular for one of the gentler sex. She wore, buttoned closely over the bosom of her dress, a coarse green pea-jacket; and a ponderous sou'wester, which had been blown from her head, while she clung to the spar, dangled by its strings from her neck. She had, evidently, donned these articles of apparel while aboard the wreck, in order to protect herself as much as possible from the drenching spray. When we add, that her face was very small and thin, her nose long and sharp, her eyes bulging and of a pale blue, and that she was continually moving her head up and down in the capacious coat-collar, the reader can form some idea of her odd appearance. Encountering the glance directed toward her by the male passenger, she burst into a fit of hysterical weeping.

"Oh, dear me! Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!" she groaned, "I shall be drowned! I know I shall! We shall all be drowned! And *you*, parson—*you*!" she shrieked, clutching the arm of the gentleman in black, "you, too—one of God's shepherds—one of God's ministers!—it is fearful to think that *you*, too, are doomed!"

"His will be done!" answered the parson, meekly. "I am not afraid to die, Miss Trundle! But I trust," he added, looking toward Harmon, "I trust, thanks to this noble young man, that we shall be preserved; yea, though the tempest bloweth its horn aloud, and the sea rages like a roaring lion!"

"Those words!" cried Miss Trundle, in a piercing tone. "Only to hear those brave, consoling words! Oh! parson, you have inspired me with hope once more! But, I am very weak! The hardships I have already undergone have taken away all my strength! It is the way with our sex, Mr. Trust, *you* know it is! Oh, dear! I feel as though I *should* drop!"

And, she *did* drop—dropped her head upon the minister's bosom!

Gently but quickly he propped her up, bade her be of good cheer, and then, with a sneeze and a meek smile, shifted his position.

"Oh, aunt! don't go on so, I beg of you!" exclaimed the young girl, as the sobbing was recommenced. "There is no great danger now. As soon as the wind abates, we will be enabled to reach the land!"

"Oh, dear me! oh, Lord! Lord! Minnie, you don't understand me at all! You can't comprehend a sensitive nature like mine! The slightest peril makes me tremble like a leaf! Every time the boat's bows go under, it seems to me as if we were about to sink!"

"Which, beggin' your pardon, ma'am," said one of the men, an old sailor, wearing duck trowsers and a canvas jacket, "is a borrowin' of trouble, seeing as we can keep the boat perfectly dry by bailing her out; ain't that so, Squint?" he added, addressing his shipmate, who was occupied in this task. "Speak up, and tell the lady so!"

"Why, bless my eyes!" cried Squint, a little dapper-looking tar, whose pants were very tight about the waist, and very loose around the ankles. "Why, bless my eyes! there's no more danger, ma'am, than if you were a-bending over a wash-tub at home. Cheer up, ma'am—cheer up! Hip! hip! hip! *Hoo-ray! hoo-ray!*" And he began to dance a sort of hornpipe upon one of the thwarts of the boat.

"My friend," the parson meekly remarked, "this levity is

in bad taste just after so many of your shipmates have gone down in a watery grave. A more serious bearing—”

“I beg pardon,” interrupted the dapper tar, as he again seized the bailer, “it was only done for consol’n’ the lady. I have heard it said that examples is contagious!”

“An insult,” shrieked Miss Trundle. “Mr. Trust—*parson* Trust, I call upon you for protection! I call upon every man in the boat for protection! The idea of my imitating *his* example; of my dancing about in that heathenish fashion! And then the wash-tub! A wash-tub! a wash-tub!” she screamed, in thrilling accents, “he dared to speak of a *wash-tub* in connection with *ME*!”

“Do calm yourself, dear aunt!” cried Minnie. “I am sure that he intended no insult. Remember, that he and his ship-mate lashed us to the spar, and were thus instrumental in saving our lives!”

“Any man!” exclaimed Squint, springing to his feet, “any man that would insult a lady, deserves stringing up! If I’ve said any thing as is offensive, I apologize in a way which is both sorrowful and penitentiary!”

“Amen!” cried the parson, with a loud sneeze; “I think *that* is satisfactory.”

“If *you* say so—yes!” exclaimed Miss Trundle, placing herself by the parson’s side. “I have the most perfect confidence in your judgment! But, oh! *dear* Mr. Trust, *you* at least can appreciate the feelings of one of our sex in my situation! You know how delicately sensitive I am! how unfitted to bear hardships, or the rude remarks uttered by godless men!”

“Have faith in the Lord, Miss Trundle, and He will give you strength to bear all the ills of life,” said the parson, as he gently edged away from her; “try to cultivate a meek and Christian spirit!”

“Ah! that is my failing!” she exclaimed, fairly pouncing upon him, and putting both hands upon one of his arms. “*You* know that very well! Oh! parson! parson!” she added, in a lower voice, “there is a great deal of congeniality between us.”

The minister nodded in his usual meek way, and then, hopping to his feet, with another sneeze, asked Harmon if he did not require some assistance at the steering-oar.

"No, thank you," replied the young man. "Two men here would incommode each other. I am used to the boat, and can manage it without much difficulty. Keep your seat!"

"Ahem!" ejaculated the man of meekness, with a vague impression that Miss Trundle was maneuvering to receive him in her lap in case he should attempt to sit down. "Ahem! Perhaps, then, I can be of use here." And he laid his hand upon the bailer which Squint was using.

The dapper tar paused in his work, and opened his eyes upon the speaker with astonishment.

"You will allow me to give you a spell, as you sailors call it," said the preacher, with a benevolent smile.

"Ay, ay, sartainly, if *you* wish it; but it's an odd sort of work for you to do, parson, and I don't think you'll find it to your taste."

He surrendered the bailer, and the clergyman went to work briskly, though in a manner which differed considerably from that which Squint had adopted. The latter had squatted upon his hams, and thrown the water he had scooped up to leeward; but the parson, remaining upon his feet, with one side of his body turned toward Miss Trundle, and bending nearly double while he worked, threw the contents of the bailer behind him and to *windward*, by thrusting it between his legs, which were kept spread apart like a pair of opened tongs, for that purpose. As a natural consequence of this curious maneuvering, the water was blown back into the boat as fast as it was thrown; the greater portion of it first flying over the face and neck of Minnie's aunt.

"Oh dear! oh dear! was there ever such a suffering, persecuted lady as I am!" she shrieked, as she moved further aft.

"Parson! *Parson* Trust! You are throwing the water all over me! Do you hear, parson? You have almost suffocated me! To think that *you* should do it, even accidentally! I shall never get over *that*—no, never!"

But, as his singular position, coupled with the din of the storm, prevented him from hearing her voice distinctly, he continued his work several minutes longer, before he thought of resigning the bailer to Squint.

The face of the dapper tar was now all "puckered up" like a brown, shriveled apple. One of his fingers rested lightly upon the side of his nose, and he winked at the parson in a knowing manner, which surprised and puzzled that worthy exceedingly.

"Friend, I don't understand you," he said, gently. "What is the meaning of this pantomime?"

"Ay, ay, with all due respect to you, sir," whispered Squint, "it *was* a cunnin' way of getting her off your seat. I wouldn't do sich a thing myself, but, seein' as you were provoked, I suppose it was perfectly nat'ral."

Honest Mr. Trust opened his eyes, sneezed, and looked more puzzled than ever.

"The mischief you did wasn't as great as it might have been," continued Squint, "and p'raps, on that account, may in some sort be excused, a-leavin' chivalry out of the question. She was wet through before you throwed the water on her, d'ye see, and couldn't be made much wetter!"

"To whom do you allude?"

"Ay, ay, cork me! but, I think there's a spice of fun in your natur', after all, parson. You ain't in 'arnest with that question? You know that it's Miss Trundle—"

The clergyman did not wait to hear more. The whole truth now flashing upon his mind, he interrupted Squint with a loud sneeze, turned, and, making his way to the side of Minnie's aunt, apologized for his awkwardness, assuring her that his wetting her with the water was unintentional. Stifling a sob, she replied that "it was of no consequence;" that as *he* was the author of the calamity, she could easily overlook it, but that if it had been anybody *else*, she could never have forgiven it—no, never!"

"And now, aunt," said Minnie, after Trust had returned to his seat, "pray don't cry any more. The boat will keep afloat, and I hope that we will all be ashore before another night."

She looked inquiringly at Harmon, as she spoke, and he knew, by her pale face and shuddering form, that she felt more alarm than she was willing to express in words.

In fact, as we have hinted elsewhere, it was only the extreme *violence* of the tempest which—by keeping the sea

down almost on a dead level—prevented the boat from being swamped. A moderate gale would have been accompanied with a heavy sea, which would certainly have insured the loss of a boat containing six persons.

Now, however, with Harmon's skillful steering, and the exertions of Squint and his chum, the light craft was kept both steady and dry, from which it resulted that—with the exception of Miss Trundle—all those who had lately been rescued from the very jaws of a watery grave, took a hopeful view of the future. Weldon, on the contrary, though outwardly calm, felt his spirit clouded with dark misgivings. He knew that the abating of the tempest would be attended with a heavy, violent sea, which no boat could withstand. His little craft, moreover, was being borne further and further from the island every moment, so that, if, by rare good luck, she should escape after the rising of the waters, a long time must elapse before the friendly shore could be gained.

These harassing thoughts, however, did not prevent him from answering cheerfully when he encountered the questioning glance of the fair Minnie.

"We will hope for the best," he said. "The land as yet is only little more than a league to windward."

"But we are going further and further from it all the time," cried Miss Trundle, "and we shall all be either drowned or starved to death. Oh, Minnie! Minnie! You are the cause of my being in this dreadful situation!"

"I?" exclaimed the young girl, "I the cause of it, aunt?"

"Yes, you, and none other. Had it not been for your wild determination to visit your old uncle in the East Indies, this would never have happened, and we might, even now, be sitting in our snug little cottage in Brooklyn."

"But *you* were not obliged to go with me," said Minnie.

Here Miss Trundle lifted her hands, and uttered a cry of horror.

"What an idea! What a scandalous—what a shocking idea! A wild young girl like you going so far, *alone*! But, that's the way—yes—yes, that's the way you repay the interest I take in your welfare. You might as well have said at once: "You could have stayed at home—I didn't want you! Oh, dear! Oh dear!"

"You are mistaken, aunt. I had no intention of finding fault with you. I only meant to imply that your going with me was not compulsory. As to my being a *wild* girl!" added Minnie, stamping her little foot, and blushing deeply, "you know that I am *not*! Papa and his brother were much attached to each other, and were much together before the death of—"

"And because your father died," interrupted Miss Trundle, testily, "and you have no mother, either, I am all the more careful of you, and bound to watch over you and protect you! *That* was why I went with you in that ill-fated ship! Oh, Lord! oh, dear me!"

"And I think," said Minnie, "that my wish to visit my sick old uncle, who has no living relative but myself, was very natural. The idea of his suffering sickness—an old man like him—without a single true friend to smooth his pillow, or give him a drink of water, was terrible. I am not the only girl who would have—"

"Enough! enough!" again interrupted Miss Trundle. "You know my sensitiveness, my delicate sensitiveness upon such points. Your poor uncle is dead; we will not allude to him again! It makes me shake all over to think of his suffering. Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

Minnie turned away her head, but Harmon already had seen the tears which she vainly struggled to repress.

"Yes," continued the aunt, after a moment's pause, "your uncle is dead; and he died *poor*; died before he had commenced that splendid business which would have built him a fortune. These circumstances are too distressing to think of. Oh, Lord! Oh, dear! *if* we had only stayed at home."

"I would not have stayed at home!" cried Minnie, sadly but spiritedly, "even if it had been necessary to *beg* a passage to the shores where my uncle lived!"

"Oh, Minnie! Minnie!—oh, dear! When will you learn the proprieties of life! What will this young man think of you!" she added, in a lower voice, looking askance at Weldon. "He has heard every word you have said."

"I have said nothing that I am ashamed of," Minnie returned, tapping the bottom of the boat with one of her boots.

At the same moment, encountering Harmon's admiring

glance, her eyelashes drooped, and she blushed. Her aunt, remarking this exhibition of feeling, turned sharply toward the young steersman, and from him back again to her charge.

"Minnie!" she whispered, solemnly, "there must be no love-making between you and that wild youth. Oh, mercy! The very thought of *such* a thing makes me shiver all over!"

Minnie pouted slightly before she replied:

"I don't see what has given you any such idea, aunt, I am sure. We haven't as yet exchanged ten syllables."

"No; no! But looks sometimes speak plainer than words!" muttered Miss Trundle, sharply. "I saw that *look*! It was shocking! shocking!" Remember, your mother left you in my charge, and—

"Why, cork me! Hip! hip! hip! Keep up your spirits, my hearties!" came the shrill voice of the dapper tar, at this instant, as he sprung to his feet. "There it is. Ay, ay, there's the raft that we fashioned aboard the ship before she went down, but which got adrift after we launched it overboard!"

Minnie clapped her hands, and laughed as gleefully as a child; the parson began to pray; Harmon gave a shout of joy; even Miss Trundle smiled.

There it was, right ahead of them, a large raft, to which were lashed several bags of biscuits, some breakers of fresh water, and a few barrels of beef. The boat was soon alongside of it, and was firmly secured to it with ropes.

"God is good!" cried the parson, rising and rubbing his hands when the task was completed. "It is through His divine interposition that this fortunate circumstance has been brought about."

"Hear him!" cried Miss Trundle, admiringly, "hear this good man, all of you! Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

None were more overjoyed than Harmon Weldon. The finding and securing of the raft set his mind perfectly at ease. He believed that the boat and the floating platform of well-fastened timbers, lashed together, were capable of withstanding the heaviest sea that ever rolled.

As the gray dawn crept over the stormy ocean, the little party looked eagerly for the island. But this, in the rack and

mist of the tempest, which still raged with unabated violence, was not to be seen. Miss Trundle heaved a weary sigh, and nestling up to the parson, complained of feeling sleepy.

"Ahem!" ejaculated the clergyman, uneasily, "I dare say that some kind of a rude bed could be made for you upon the raft. There is plenty of spare canvas, I believe, and—"

But, Miss Trundle could hold out no longer. Her eyes closed, and with a sudden downward jerk, her head drooped upon the good man's shoulder.

He sneezed, and shifted nervously in his seat. The eyes of the two seamen were upon him, and once he fancied he saw a knowing wink exchanged between them. To add to his discomfort, Miss Trundle soon began to snore in a manner which was far from melodious.

"Them that's benevolent is always imposed upon, Bolt," remarked Squint, in an undertone to his chum. "The parson can't, of course, let the poor lady drop, and—"

"My eyes!" returned Bolt, "you don't call it imposin' upon him—do ye?—because the poor creatur' can't keep her lids open. Why it's nat'ral enough that she should want to lay her head *somewhere*. She's all wet through, and tired, and half frightened to death!"

These words reached the victim's ears. He was a very benevolent man, and could not think of removing his shoulder from beneath the weary head of one of the gentler sex. But, to transfer that head to the shoulder of some other person would, he thought, be proper under the circumstances. It struck him, that after the sympathy expressed by Bolt for Miss Trundle, the old seaman would not refuse the head of the spinster.

"My friend," said he, with a meek smile, laying his hand upon the mariner's arm, "will you be kind enough to put your shoulder here in place of mine?"

Bolt drew a huge plug of tobacco from his pocket, and having cut it, thrust nearly the half of it into his mouth, as if to fortify himself for some great and difficult undertaking.

"Ay, ay, I never yet refused a lass my supper," he replied, "and it can make no sort of difference, even though, as under present circumstances, she is old and some'at faded!"

"*Old and faded!*" shrieked Miss Trundle, suddenly opening her eyes and starting up. "Old and faded, you godless wretch! Oh, dear! dear! dear! to think that I should ever live to hear myself insulted in this manner! Will no man be my champion? will no man take my part?" she continued, looking around her with a sharp glance. "Oh! oh! oh!"

With much difficulty Minnie alone succeeded at last in calming her aunt. The latter had turned a deaf ear to all the protestations of the old tar, who felt considerably hurt in the idea, that she should think he had intended to insult her. Unfortunately, he had made a bad matter worse, by expressing himself in the following manner:

"Nobody never knowed me, ma'am, to insult a woman. I wouldn't deserve the name of an honest tar, which has been my pride ever since I've sailed salt water, if I did any sich small trick. Ay, ay, I was only a-telling the truth! I had no intention of meaning an insult—I'll swear to it on a stack of Bibles as high as a ship's main-truck!"

Miss Trundle never forgave the old sailor for making such a speech; in fact, from the moment it was uttered, she could not look at him without feeling a strong temptation to scratch out his eyes with her long nails.

CHAPTER

IN AND OUT OF PERIL.

It was at least at high noon, when the violence of the gale began to abate. As if exulting in their escape from the power which so long had held them down, the great waves leaped upward, roaring and crashing with the noise of thunder. Boat and raft were tossed hither and thither with a violence that caused the young sailor to secure them with extra lashings lest they should be torn asunder. Each of the party then made a meal of a few sea-biscuits, with which all were contented except Miss Trundle.

That lady clamored loudly for better fare, and when she

was informed that it could not be procured, commenced to weep, sob, and to bemoan her lamentable situation in a characteristic manner.

"The wind has begun to change," said Weldon, in the hope of putting an end to her complaints. "I trust that it will haul round sufficiently in a few hours to enable us to make an effort to gain the island, where we will find plenty of fruit."

"Alas! alas!" replied Miss Trundle. "And that is all. Fruit is all that we can get. How can I live on that. It will only make me grow thin; it will take away all my bloom."

The parson sneezed; Squint hitched up his waistbands; Bolt looked uncommonly grave.

"I never heard before that fruit injured the complexion, aunt," said Minnie. "On the contrary, most people think that it improves it."

"Improves it!" cried Miss Trundle. "And do you really mean to hint that my complexion needs improving? Oh, dear! oh, dear! to think—"

"I did not mean to imply that," interrupted Minnie, "indeed I did not."

"We can get fish, too, madam, and I doubt not that I can prepare it to suit you," said Harmon. "I can cook very well."

Miss Trundle was fond of fish; but, hoping she might eventually excite the parson's sympathy, she continued her complaints.

Trust, however, took no notice of her; and so, after indulging her grief for a full hour, she uttered one long, despairing groan, and became silent.

As Harmon had declared would be the case, the wind hauled round before night. The sea having subsided by this time, the men, grasping oars and paddles, were soon occupied in working the raft and boat toward the island, now dimly visible about two leagues to leeward. While thus engaged, they saw the clouds break in the west, and were cheered with a view of the setting sun. The red light streamed far along the upheaving waves, forming thousands of little rainbows in the spray.

"Beautiful! beautiful!" cried Minnie, clapping her hands.

"Yea, wonderful are *His* works!" exclaimed the parson. "Man can not be sufficiently thankful for the manifold blessings bestowed upon him, even in this world."

"Did you *ever*!" screamed Miss Trundle, clasping her hands admiringly, "did you ever hear such a mighty speech as that, any of you?"

"Ay! ay!" cried Squint, "without wishin' to rob the parson of any of his credit, I once heard a mightier. It was when I was in the bark Coral, off Cape Horn. On that occasion, d'ye see, our skipper, whose name was Boom, made himself heard from the to'gallant yard, by the men that was asleep in the fo'castle. His voice was perfectly astonishin'."

"That ain't a sarcumstance to what I heard!" exclaimed Bolt, "while I was a-cruisin' off the coast of Africa. It was nothin' less than the roarin' of a lion, three leagues to wind'ard."

"Shocking! Dreadful!" ejaculated Miss Trundle. "Oh, dear! oh, dear! to hear the way these godless men *do* go on! Just as though there was any comparison between the skipper of a ship, a wild beast and the parson."

"They mean no offense," said Trust, meekly. "I am sure of that. When we reach the island, however, I shall take it upon myself to instruct them in—"

"They need it!" snapped the spinster. "They need it badly enough; especially that coarse animal!" she continued, nodding contemptuously toward Bolt.

"Thank ye ma'am," said the latter; "none of us is above instruction, and I'm sure I shall be 'obligated' to the parson for l'arning me my letters or any thing else."

"You are a perfect heathen!" retorted Miss Trundle.

"See, aunt!" cried Minnie, hoping thus to divert her relative's attention; "see, there is the island! We are fast approaching it! It is a beautiful place, I know."

"For cannibals, yes," answered the other, "but for civilized beings it is a deplorable spot!"

"I would willingly live there all my life!" cried Harmon. "I have become attached to that little island. I look upon it as a paradise."

"And you have lived there all alone?" said Minnie, inquiringly.

"Yes," he answered, smiling, "all alone."

"And you could be contented to live *thus* for a lifetime?"

"I always thought so until *now*," he said, directing upon her an ardent but respectful glance of admiration.

She could not misunderstand him, and she turned away her face to conceal a blush.

Miss Trundle compressed her lips and frowned.

"Sir," she said, turning sharply upon Harmon, "I am perfectly shocked. I will have no love-making between you and my niece."

"Madam!" exclaimed the parson, good-naturedly interposing, "allow me to say that I think you are too hasty. A compliment from one of our sex to one of your's should not be censured."

"Oh, dear! dear! but don't you think the expression he used was highly improper?"

"I do not," said the benevolent Trust, in a gentle voice; "any more than if I were to say that you have a fine head of hair, which is really the case."

Miss Trundle blushed and simpered; while Minnie, who knew that her aunt wore a wig, looked to windward to conceal the smile that hovered around the corners of her mouth.

"The parson understands human nature," Squint whispered to Bolt.

"Ay, ay!" returned the latter, "he's a whole cargo of l'arn-in' in that head of his'n; besides which, he's so benevolent."

"He ain't one of them kind that feels independent, neither, seeing as he used sometimes to help us haul on the ropes, just for exercise."

Mr. Trust's compliment put Miss Trundle in such good humor that she did not utter another word of complaint for several hours. By this time, the white beach of the island could be seen quite plainly in the light of the rising moon.

"We will soon be there!" cried Harmon, joyfully; "the shore isn't half a league distant."

Minnie rose to her feet with a glad cry, and, at the same instant, the boat was tossed upward by a heavy sea. The young girl lost her balance and would certainly have been precipitated over the gunwale, if Harmon had not supported her by throwing an arm around her waist.

"Oh, good Lord!" screamed Miss Trundle, turning scarlet,

"*how* improper!" Minnie, sit down this instant; and *you*, young man, how *dared* you do any thing so—so—very—"

"Verily!" again interposed the benevolent parson, "you are too hasty, my dear madam. The youth has done nothing improper, but has, on the contrary, acted in a praiseworthy manner. Your niece would certainly have fallen overboard but for his activity."

"No! no!" cried Miss Trundle, "he might have taken hold of her arm, which would have answered every purpose. But, to throw his arm around her waist—oh, dear! dear! how terribly shocking! I shall never get over *that* as long as I live!"

So saying, she drew her niece toward the forward part of the boat, and, nestling close to the parson, delivered, in a shrill voice, for the edification of all present, a long lecture upon the improprieties committed by the young people of the present age. Just as she concluded, the boat struck the beach; and, leaping out, Harmon offered his hand to Minnie to help her ashore. Miss Trundle, however, interposed, requesting the parson to perform that duty.

"Certainly," responded the trusty Trust, "though I see no harm in—"

He was interrupted by the spinster, who, taking advantage of the rocking motion of the boat, allowed herself to fall sideways in a way which compelled him to support her with his arms. He lifted her quickly out of the vessel, and, planting her in the sand, turned to assist her niece.

But, the latter already had placed both hands in those of Weldon, and sprung upon the beach unperceived by her aunt.

The whole party being now ashore, Squint proceeded to gather some dry sticks so as to make a fire; while the other three men, having secured the boat, pulled the raft to the beach, and conveyed the provisions it contained to the banks of the little lake near which Harmon intended to erect huts for the accommodation of the "cast-aways."

A fire soon was kindled, and, while the two females were drying their saturated garments, the work of building shelters was commenced. With such good assistants as the two sailors and the parson, Harmon completed his task in the course of a few hours. Two comfortable huts were framed, one for

Minnie and her aunt, the other for the two seamen. Minister Trust was to share Weldon's quarters.

The young girl thanked the men for their exertions in behalf of herself and aunt, and declared that she was much pleased with her rural habitation. Miss Trundle, on the contrary, shed tears, and remarked that she thought this way of living was little better than that of the Hottentots.

For her part, she could never—*never* feel happy again, until she was restored to the "bosom" of her own sweet native land. She also found fault with the supper prepared for herself and Minnie. It consisted of pieces of salt beef (boiled in a tin cup), sea-biscuits, bananas and oranges. She clamored loudly for tea, and, on being informed that it could not be procured, declared that this deprivation would cause her a month's headache.

The niece, however, seemed much pleased with her meal; she thought it was delightful to eat supper in such a beautiful place, with the moon shining overhead. When with her aunt she had retired to their couch of dried leaves and pea-jackets—the latter serving for pillows—it was not long before she fell into a sound, sweet slumber, undisturbed by the complaints of the spinster, who still continued her ill-natured remarks. Discovering at length that she was talking to the empty air, Miss Trundle turned over upon her side with a heavy groan, and surrendered herself to the arms of Morpheus. She was fast asleep when Minnie awoke at daylight, and, rising softly, so as not to disturb her, the young girl pushed aside the canvas screen in front of the hut and looked out. The gale had subsided to a moderate breeze, and the surface of the ocean was covered with little ripples that rolled with a tinkling sound upon the beach. Gratefully inhaling the fragrance from orange groves and wild flowers, the maiden left the hut, and, with a light step, moved to the edge of the little lake. Having there performed her morning ablutions, she proceeded to comb her long, bright hair. While thus occupied, it was quite natural that her thoughts should turn upon him who, like Crusoe, was, until then, sole inhabitant of the place; that she should cast more than one glance at the reflection of her own sweet face in the calm water was not unwomanly, as thoughts of the young sailor filled her mind.

She was very particular, this morning, in the arrangement of her nut-brown braids, and therefore when she discovered that several of her hair-pins were lost, she hurried toward the boat, hoping that she might find them in some part of the little craft. The tide had risen, and the boat with the warp tied to a stake, was floating a few yards from the beach. Minnie seized the rope, and, pulling the vessel to the shore, sprung into it. Unfortunately, in doing so, she pushed it with a force which caused it to shoot from the land, and drag the loosened stake after it. The current, whirling toward the reef, carried the craft in this direction with great velocity; and, as the oars and paddles had been removed on the previous night, the young girl saw no means of regaining the shore.

Much alarmed, she called for help; but her friends being fast asleep in their huts, could not hear her voice.

The light craft was borne onward, and very soon it struck the reef, over which the white water rolled and surged with a hollow roar. The boat, becoming wedged between two pieces of rock, filled in a few seconds, and, with a low shriek of terror, Minnie grasped a long bunch of sea-weed, to which she clung desperately with both hands, to prevent herself from being washed into the sea. Her situation certainly was perilous. Her feeble strength was insufficient to enable her to maintain hold of the weeds for any great length of time; the rolling surge broke over her almost continually, and she was now too far from the shore to have made her cries heard by her friends, even had they been awake.

Minutes—they seemed hours to her—passed away; her wrists ached with the continual strain upon them; her heart beat loud and fast with terror; she felt that she could not hold on much longer. Not for a moment had her anxious glance quitted the beach; and a thrill of joy pervaded her frame, when, after watching it for nearly a quarter of an hour, she saw the little figure of Squint moving toward the water's edge. As is usual with the seaman, he first looked to windward. Then he scanned the surface of the ocean closely as if searching for some fragment of the wreck. At last he turned his eyes toward the reef, and beheld the half-submerged figure of the young girl!

She saw him start; the next moment heard him shout, and

beheld the forms of parson Trust, Weldon and Bolt, emerge from their huts. Encouraging her with cries and gesticulations, they procured oars and paddles, and springing upon the rafts, were soon working it rapidly toward the reef.

Though her wrists were now almost benumbed by her long-continued hold of the weeds, yet she still contrived to cling to them with a tenacity which prevented her from being washed into deep water.

"That's right!" shouted Squint, when the raft was within twenty fathoms of the rocks, "that's right; hold on hard, my lass, and we'll soon be up to you, and—"

"God help her—God have mercy on her!" said the parson, in a low voice, as he pointed to a long, sharp fin which was now moving rapidly through the surface of the water toward the young girl. Luckily *she* did not see it; otherwise she would, in all probability, have become so alarmed, as to lose all power of maintaining her hold.

"It is a shark!" whispered Weldon and Squint, simultaneously.

"Yea, verily!" muttered the parson, in a voice of horror, "and I'm afraid it will devour the young lady before we can afford her any assistance."

In fact, it seemed hardly possible that the raft could be worked to the spot occupied by the girl in time to insure her rescue, for the shark, which was swimming at right-angles with the floating platform, was approaching her with great rapidity.

"Work your paddles lively, for God's sake, men, *work*; strain every muscle!" cried Weldon in a husky voice. "Oh, God, if we should not succeed in saving her!"

Nearer and nearer to the young girl, steadily and swiftly, glided that long, fearful-looking fin. It was soon within ten fathoms of her; six feet less than the distance of the raft.

The parson groaned; Weldon compressed his lips tightly; Squint made his paddle fly through the water like a mill-wheel. The clumsy spars, however, seemed scarcely to move. Harmon felt assured that the ferocious-looking jaws of the shark would soon close over the lovely girl, unless he tried some other means of saving her. He kicked off his shoes and divested himself of his jacket.

"What are you a-going to do?" cried Squint. "You can't hope to fright that monster with a weapon sich as that!" he added, as the young man drew a well-sharpened sheath-knife from his belt.

"Ay, ay," answered Weldon. "I can at least keep the creature away from the girl until you come up. If I perish in the attempt it matters not, provided *she* be saved."

So saying he leaped about five feet from the raft, and, assisted by the current, swam rapidly toward the reef. The shark was so far ahead of him, however, that in spite of his utmost exertions it was within a few feet of the unconscious girl, while he was yet several fathoms distant.

"It'll reach her before he does!" groaned the parson; "there's no help for it. God have mercy on the poor maiden!"

"Ay, ay," exclaimed Squint, in sorrowful accents. "She's gone! She's lost! No human power can save the poor lass now! The creatur' is within a few feet of her, and he'll go under directly to snap at her!"

As he spoke, Harmon suddenly stopped swimming, while the water in his immediate vicinity became discolored with blood.

Trust and Squint uttered a simultaneous cry of horror, believing that a second shark had seized the young man. A moment after they discovered their mistake, for, as he lifted his arm to motion them on, they saw, a little below the elbow, a slight gash, which it was evident he had purposely inflicted with his knife, in the hope that the monster ahead might scent blood and thus be turned from its present course.

His heart almost failed him, however, and he fairly groaned with anguish in seeing the creature move steadily on. Soon it was not more than a foot from the girl; but just as he was expecting to see it dive to clutch its intended victim, the monster became nearly stationary for a moment, and then turned slowly round and darted toward the young sailor.

Squint gave three cheers; the parson offered up thanks to God; while the young man, with a joyful cry, struck out for the raft, which was now within a few fathoms of him. He was soon upon the platform of spars; a few moments later the shark sprung nearly its full length out of the water alongside of the raft.

"Lively, men, lively!" shouted Harmon, in seeing the monster appear soon after astern of them. "That rascal is still following us, and if we don't make haste, may yet succeed in reaching the girl!"

The four strained every muscle, and, in a moment more, Minnie was rescued from her perilous situation. Weldon then kept the shark at bay with an oar, while Squint, Bolt and the parson were engaged in dislodging the boat from the reef. This task being soon accomplished, the little craft was bailed out, and the party entered it.

"Thanks, a thousand thanks, my friends!" cried Minnie, impulsively. "This is the second time," she added, addressing Squint and Weldon, "that you have saved my life!"

"It's all owing to this young man that you were saved under the circumstances that have just passed!" cried Squint, putting a hand upon Harmon's shoulder. "The shark would have nabbed you sure if it hadn't been for him!"

For the first time since her rescue, Minnie noticed the blood-stained arm of her preserver. He had hitherto kept it hidden from her sight by means of his jacket, which he had fastened to his shoulder. The garment having fallen off, however, the wound was now fully exposed.

"You have suffered on my account!" she cried, in a quick, faltering voice, "you are badly hurt!"

"Nay, my good young lady," said the parson, as he proceeded to fasten his white kerchief over the gash, "it is merely a scratch. Do not be alarmed!"

Squint entered into explanations, and Minnie's eyes filled with tears. She was a girl of deep feeling, and, on learning that Harmon had wounded himself, and risked his life to save her, she could not prevent the emotions of sorrow and tenderness excited by his gallantry.

"It is nothing," said he, noticing her anxiety. "As the parson says, it is only a slight scratch. Nearly all trace of it will have passed away in a couple of weeks."

At that instant all in the boat were startled by a piercing shriek from the direction of the beach. They rose quickly, and, glancing toward the shore, saw Miss Trundle, who had advanced to the water's edge, wildly gesticulating with both arms.

"Good heavens! What can be the matter with my aunt?" exclaimed Minnie, in considerable alarm.

"Cork me!" cried Squint, "but there's something surprising about it. She *must* be in some kind of danger, and yet there ain't any danger to be seen. There's neither wild monkeys nor cannibals on this island, and under sich sarcumstances it's most astonishin' what can be the matter with her!"

"*Something* has occurred to frighten her, at any rate," said the parson, sneezing. "We will make all haste to reach the shore."

He seized a paddle to assist the men at the oars, and Weldon loosened the boat from the raft, remarking that they could tow it ashore after they had discovered the cause of Miss Trundle's alarm. The light keel soon grated upon the beach, and Trust had no sooner sprung to the land, than the spinster threw herself plump into his arms, crying, "Save me! Save me!"

Squint and Bolt exchanged glances and whistled.

"What has happened?" cried Weldon.

"Verily, what *has* happened?" inquired the parson, somewhat nervously, as he meekly strove to disengage himself from the clinging grasp of Miss Trundle's arms.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" gasped the latter. "I shall faint, I shall die. How *could* you leave me alone upon this barbarous island!"

"Why, aunt, what *is* the matter? What has alarmed you?" cried Minnie, turning pale.

The spinster burst into a flood of tears.

"Oh, you ungrateful girl! *You* are the cause of it all; the cause of my being left alone so long," she sobbed. "I don't think I can ever forgive you for it—no, never! There! there!" she gasped, clutching the minister's arm with one hand, while she pointed with the other to a clump of shrubbery near the right bank of the lake. "There! *there*!"

"Why, cork me, if I can make out any thing!" exclaimed Squint.

"What is it? What do *you* see?" demanded the others.

"It isn't there now," replied Miss Trundle, shuddering, "but it *was* there—yes, I know it *was* there ten minutes ago!"

"What?"

"A *man*!" shrieked Minnie's aunt. "A real live *man*."

"You must have been deceived, madam," said Weldon.

"Deceived! Oh, dear! oh, dear! how could I have been deceived. Didn't I hear a heavy rustling in those bushes? didn't I hear the crackling of twigs? Who," she continued, with a heart-rending sob, "could have made that rustling and crackling but a *man*; a man come to insult me, because I was alone and unprotected."

"Did you see him?" inquired Squint.

"See him! And do you suppose I should have stayed there long enough to see him! No—no! I ran down to the beach at once, and, hearing me call for help, I think it's very likely he retreated. Oh, heaven! must our sex always be persecuted on account of our attractions? Must we be hunted, insulted, and—oh, dear me!" she interrupted, with a fresh burst of tears, "it is terrible to think of it!"

The parson had to sneeze.

"In my opinion," said he, "you are mistaken in thinking that the noise you heard was made by a man. A cocoanut falling into the bushes might have caused it."

"Ay, ay," said Bolt, "and it's perfectly nat'ral that a susceptible natur' like this lady's should be scared by a 'cocoanut and convart it into a man."

Miss Trundle directed a fierce glance at the old tar.

"Parson Trust!" she shrieked, "this is an insult. I call upon you for protection!"

"Why, cork me," cried Squint, "I'll answer for it that no insult was meant. Bolt, d'ye see, has a way of applyin' the wrong tarms to express himself. By 'susceptible natur' he meant 'skeptical natur', which explanatory on my part, will, as I take it, set every thing right and ship-shape atween you and him, ma'am!"

So saying, he darted off to follow Weldon, who was now moving toward the clump of shrubbery amid which the spinster had stated she heard the noise. After searching a few minutes the two men found a cocoanut, which, it was evident, had recently fallen from a tree that grew near the bushes. Squint seized the prize, and was about to elevate it above his head, with a shout of triumph, when Harmon suddenly placed a hand upon his arm and pointed to a dry stick lying upon the ground, and which had been evidently trodden upon, as it was broken in the middle.

"Some person has passed this way," he said. "The stick is too thick to have been broken by the cocoanut. Perhaps, however, it may have been done by one of our own party."

"Not by me," replied Squint, "as I've never before paid a visit to this quarter."

"Nor I. I have always passed to the right of these bushes on quitting my hut."

"P'raps, then, we'd better question Bolt and the parson."

They did so, and Trust immediately replied that he believed, but was not quite certain, that he had walked through the bushes on the previous night.

"That sets the matter almost at rest," said Squint, "but not quite. If the parson was only sartain upon the p'int it would—"

"It's all right," interrupted Harmon. "I have lived here several months, and have explored the island many times. There can be no person here besides ourselves. And now," he added, "we will go after the raft. We may yet find the spars very useful."

"Parson Trust—you must not go!" cried Miss Trundle, seizing him by the coat-tail as he was moving toward the boat. "You must stay ashore to protect us women. I shall certainly die of fright if you go."

"Why, aunt, there is no danger," said Minnie. "You know—"

"You are a wild girl!" interrupted the spinster, "and will never learn the real proprieties of life. The idea of two single ladies remaining for an hour or so without a protector upon a barbarous island. It is shocking to think of. Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

Trust looked uneasy; but he bowed with his usual meek smile, and said he would stay; whereupon Miss Trundle rolled her eyes skyward, and, in a fervent voice, ejaculated, "Thank God!"

The boat, manned by Bolt, Squint and Weldon, left the beach soon after, and, with the spinster clinging tremblingly to his arm, the parson stood watching it as it receded.

In the course of an hour the raft was fastened to and towed ashore. After it was secured the three seamen set themselves to work to prepare breakfast. In one of the bags taken from

the raft, Bolt found a few pounds of coffee and sugar, together with a small tin pail; a discovery which seemed to delight every one of the party with the exception of Miss Trundle, who said she cared for no kind of drink except tea.

"I am very fond of coffee," said Minnie, clapping her hands, "and I shall enjoy it much more under these beautiful cocoanut trees than I would if I were at home."

"You are a perfect heathen!" said her aunt, sharply, "and heaven only knows what will become of you!"

Harmon started. Had a thunderbolt fallen at that moment and annihilated Miss Trundle where she sat, for uttering such a tremendous falsehood, he would not have been much surprised. Sitting on a smooth log which he had prepared for her, with the golden light of the rising sun shining upon her bright hair, and softly touching her rounded cheek; her dark eyes beaming with spirit and feeling, her small hands resting upon her lap like two little shells of pearl, and her gaitered feet peeping from beneath her skirt; she looked like any thing but a heathen.

The morning repast soon was ready, and, with the birds hopping and singing around them, and the murmur of distant streams falling softly upon their ears, the little party clustered around the piece of clean canvas spread upon the grass, in lieu of a tablecloth, and partook of their meal.

"God is good," said the parson, when they had finished the repast; "let us thank God for enabling us to reach this lovely spot, this beautiful paradise in the ocean!"

And, much to the admiration of Miss Trundle, he sunk upon his knees and commenced a fervent prayer.

The spinster suddenly interrupted it, however, by a piercing shriek, at the same time pouncing upon the clergyman and throwing both arms about his neck.

"Help! help! help!" she gasped. "Oh, dear! oh, dear! I shall faint—I shall never get over this!"

"What is it? What is the matter?" cried the four men, springing to their feet.

"I saw it this time!" gasped Miss Trundle, pointing toward a rock not far off. "I saw it plainly!"

"Saw what?"

"A brown cap! Oh, dear! dear! a *brown cap*!"

"You are nervous, madam. Your imagination must have deceived you," said the parson, gently disengaging himself from the spinster's grasp. "To set your mind at ease, however," he added, hopping to one side to escape the clutch of Miss Trundle's outstretched hand, "I will go and examine the rocks!"

He was followed by Harmon and Squint. They searched the hollows and crevices in the rock and the shrubbery beyond, but could see nothing of the "brown cap." They discovered, however, upon the top of the rugged elevation, a large leaf, of a dark yellow color, which, seen from the spot occupied by the spinster, might have been mistaken by her excited imagination, for the article of which she had spoken.

"Isn't this what you saw, madam?" shouted Trust, pointing to the leaf.

"Oh, dear, oh dear! I don't know, but I think not. I only gave it one glance; but I feel pretty certain it was a brown cap! Still it may only have been that leaf. I hope so, I am sure. I should certainly die if it was really a brown cap!"

"Ay! ay! it's pretty sartain now this is what scared her," cried Squint; "it's astonishin' how skeptical she is; a mistakin' every thing for a man!"

"Which," said Bolt, who had joined them, "is perfectly nat'ral, I suppose, considerin' that she seems to have been brought up in the fear of every man exceptin' parsons, which kind never wears brown caps, nor goes 'round in the bushes a-cuttin' up pranks to scare wimmen."

The men had by this time descended the rock and were approaching the two females. Miss Trundle darted forward, and obeying an impulse which it was evident she could not resist, grasped the parson's hand.

"What should I do, if it was not for you?" she exclaimed. "My nature, which is of the tender, shrinking kind, would wither and perish but for your presence. Ah! parson, you are one of those in whom our sex can place the utmost confidence. Oh, dear! oh, dear! only to see how resolutely you advanced to examine that dreadful rock—how quickly your penetration discovered the real cause of my alarm! How *can* I express my gratitude for your gallant behavior?"

"The less said about that, madam, the better," replied Trust, with his usual meek smile. "It requires no courage to examine a leaf. And now," he quickly added, perceiving that the spinster was preparing herself for another burst of gratitude, "suppose we all take a walk. It is a beautiful morning, praise God, and I think we will enjoy a stroll."

"It will be delightful!" cried Miss Trundle, immediately taking possession of his arm, "and you shall be my cavalier. I could not wish for a nobler escort than one of God's shepherds."

Trust looked uneasy, and rubbed his nose to prevent himself from sneezing; while Squint and Bolt pulled at their forelocks and winked at each other in a knowing manner.

"Will you take my arm?" inquired Weldon, as Minnie rose from her seat.

"She can walk without it!" cried Miss Trundle, turning sharply around. "She is strong enough to walk without being supported!"

Minnie pouted and looked displeased.

"You are too particular, altogether too much so, Miss Trundle," said the parson. "Surely there can be nothing wrong in her accepting that young man's arm."

"If *you* say so—no," returned the spinster, "but, she is a wild girl, and—"

"Oh, aunt, I am *not* wild; you know I am not!" cried Minnie, while tears of vexation rose to her eyes. "When papa was living *he* never said I was wild, and he knew."

"You will permit me to remark that *I* don't think you are so," said Harmon, soothingly; "and I may add," he continued in a lower tone, "that I would not believe it if a thousand Miss Trundles should say you were."

She thanked him with a shy but grateful glance, and took the proffered arm.

"That *look*!" shrieked Miss Trundle, who had been keenly watching her niece, "oh, parson, did you notice that look?"

"Yea, and a very natural one it was!" answered Trust, as he gently drew the spinster along. "God is good, Miss Trundle. Look ahead and see that beautiful network of sunlight among the branches of those bread-fruit trees."

"It is perfectly delightful," replied the spinster, after she had

directed a sharp, warning glance at the young people behind her, "perfectly delightful. Those rays of light appear like so many bright darning-needles among the leaves."

She squeezed his arm as she spoke, and the parson, with a meek but nervous twitch of the eyebrows, looked toward Squint and Bolt to ascertain whether they had noticed the movement. He was much relieved, however, in discovering that they were sauntering off in an opposite direction. He noticed, too, that Weldon and Minnie were now almost hidden from his view by tall clumps of shrubbery; in fact, they passed from his sight even while he gazed.

"It strikes me," said Harmon, smiling upon his lovely companion, "that your aunt is a little *too* careful of you."

"It is her way," replied Minnie, "and I am sorry that I was ever left in her charge. She is very cross and disposed to be tyrannical. But she has her good qualities too, and I think she likes me."

"She *must* like you," he replied. "I don't see how she could help it."

"Why?" inquired Minnie, smiling.

"Because you are so lovely," promptly replied Harmon. She looked pleased and then laughed.

"*That* might have the opposite effect with some women," she said.

"Yes, but a woman who would allow herself to be influenced in that way, would not be worthy of *your* friendship; for you, I know, could never have such feelings."

"You are right," she answered. "One of my best friends, when I was at home, was a girl of unrivaled beauty. A silly woman would have been completely spoiled by the many compliments she received from the other sex. She was a favorite with them all; her disposition was kind and affectionate; she was a noble girl in every respect. In fact, I think that even had she been plain, her many amiable qualities would have attracted everybody with whom she associated."

"I don't doubt it," answered Harmon. "Many women think that mere beauty is the principal attraction with our sex; but they make a great mistake. *Heart*," he added, emphasizing the word strongly, "heart is what we seek. A large heart, like the sun, diffuses light and warmth throughout the

being of a woman, giving to the plain face and form a nameless grace, which is far superior to beauty, and far more powerful to attract."

"I think so too," answered Minnie, "and yet I will not deny that it would grieve me to be *very* plain."

"Yes, and permit me to say that it is only this grieving, this continual worrying on the part of a woman which can render her unattractive. It ruins her disposition; destroys almost all the better feelings of her nature; robs her of those gentle attributes which our sex love so well; in fact, almost changes her into a—"

"Hold!" interrupted Minnie, playfully. "Your picture may be very truthful, Sir Hermit; but it is certainly very doleful! I hope that I shall never grow plain if my being so would make a fright of me!"

"It would not," answered Harmon, smiling. "Your disposition would still remain the same; you would still be the same cheerful, happy being—"

"No! no!" she broke forth, shaking her head. "I am not wise enough for that. I think I should mourn over my departed glory, for years and years to come! Yes, I think I should be as foolish as any of them," she added, reflectively.

"You must be very fond of admiration, then," said he. Minnie pulled a leaf from a bush and began to pick it to pieces.

"Yes," she said, hesitatingly. "I should be fond of being admired by—by a man whom I—esteemed; but that would satisfy me."

"Well, then," said Harmon, "suppose, as you are now—beautiful and attractive—you have a certain lover, and—"

"You will suppose nothing of the kind, Sir Hermit," interrupted Minnie, blushing and laughing.

"No! no! we will only imagine it," he replied.

She remained silent and so he went on:

"This lover admires you, of course; thinks all the world of you. Suddenly, however, from some unaccountable cause, you become plain—*very* plain; but he still loves and admires you as much as he did before this happened. Would that console you for the change in your looks? Would you still feel contented?"

"Yes," she murmured, in a low voice, and he could see the soft gleam of her eyes through their long, drooping lashes. "Yes, I should feel perfectly happy under those circumstances."

Harmon's great blue eyes flashed; he pressed her hand impulsively to his heart. She looked a little alarmed, but not displeased. She gently withdrew her arm from his, stopped, and averting her face, noticed for the first time that the parson and Miss Trundle were not in sight.

"Why, what has become of my auut and Mr. Trust?" she faltered. "I do not see them."

"So much the better," he answered, promptly. "I am afraid that Miss Trundle, if we had kept by her, would have afforded you but little opportunity to enjoy your walk. Surely you are not afraid of me," he added, sorrowfully, perceiving that she trembled.

"Oh no," she answered, in the same low voice as before, "I—I was only wondering what had become of *them*."

"Let us go on, then," said he. "You have not yet seen half of the island."

She took his arm, and continuing on their way, they finally arrived upon the summit of a high ridge of land, overlooking a valley, fringed with bread-fruit trees and dense masses of shrubbery.

"Beautiful!" ejaculated Minnie, as her glances wandered among the luxuriant clusters of green foliage tinged with the red light of the sun. "Beautiful! I no longer wonder at your not caring to leave this paradise of the ocean, and—"

She paused a moment, and then shrunk back, uttering a low cry of surprise.

"What is it? What do you see?" he inquired.

"I believe I am very foolish," she said. "I dare say after all it was mere fancy; but, as I looked toward the further extremity of the valley beneath us, I thought I saw, for a single instant, the top of a *brown cap* lifted above a clump of shrubbery."

"You must have been deceived," said Harmon; "there can be no person besides ourselves and friends upon this island!"

"I think it's very likely I was mistaken," answered Minnie.

"Perhaps my aunt has made me a little nervous!"

She laughed, and, having changed the subject, they were

conversing pleasantly, when the shrill voice of Miss Trundle was faintly heard in the distance.

"Minnie! Minnie! Where are you? Oh, dear! oh, dear! what *has* become of you? It is positively shocking, your wandering off so with a man!"

The young girl blushed and pouted with vexation.

"We may as well go back," said she. "My aunt will go into hysterics if I remain out of her sight much longer."

Accordingly they retraced their way, and, in a few minutes, encountered Miss Trundle and the parson.

"Ah! Your wild ways will be the death of me yet," exclaimed the former, fixing her eyes sharply upon the face of her niece. "To think of you and this youth remaining so long out of my sight, and—"

"Madam," Trust gently interrupted, "*we* have kept out of their sight as long as they have kept out of *ours*."

"I have no more to say!" exclaimed Miss Trundle, "not a word. If *you*, parson, can see nothing wrong in it, I shall let the matter rest. But, there must be no love-making between them! No, no, I will not allow *that*!"

CHAPTER IV.

AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY.

FOUR weeks had passed since the arrival of the wrecked party upon the island. Squint and Bolt had kept a regular look-out for a sail; but thus far their vigilance had met with no reward. On land these two men were something like "fish out of water." Beautiful as their present locality was, it had no charm for them. Trees, rocks, valleys and murmuring streams were viewed by them with indifference, if not with positive dislike. Accustomed as they were to ships, barks and schooners, never staying ashore longer than two weeks when discharged from any vessel, it was natural that they were now eager to leave the island. Miss Trundle also longed to quit its beautiful shores.

"I am tired of this barbarous style of living!" she had remarked on more than one occasion. "It is ruining my complexion! Oh, dear! dear! I *do* wish I was in the bosom of my own native land!"

The parson, too, had expressed a wish to return to his native land; he felt anxious about his flock in the little village church; he had prayed for them every night.

Minnie and Harmon were the only members of the party who were contented. Happy in each other's society, the island seemed to them a perfect paradise. Reading in the eyes of the girl a tender but shy response to the feelings with which she had inspired *him*, Weldon could no longer bear the thought of living alone. She must, henceforth, be his companion through life, or life would lose every charm for him. The music of her voice, the light of her eyes, the very sound of her elastic step had become almost as necessary to his existence as the air he breathed.

It was a clear, starlight night, and our little party were seated in front of their huts, the parson and Weldon a little removed from the rest. The young sailor was speaking to the clergyman in a low, earnest voice; and the latter would now and then respond with a kind and a benevolent smile. At length Harmon became silent, and, rasing, the parson approached the log upon which Miss Trundle was seated with her niece.

"I would like to have little private conversation with you, madam," he said, and as Miss Trundle rose, he looked at Minnie and sneezed.

The young girl blushed deeply and seemed confused.

"Oh dear! dear!" thought the spinster, "a little private conversation. Can it be? Yes, yes, it must be so; I read it in his eyes; he is going to propose!"

He offered her his arm; she accepted it quickly, and they walked slowly toward the beach. As soon as they were there the parson stopped and gently pressed the hand of his companion.

"Miss Trundle," said he, "I presume you are aware of the attachment existing between your niece and the young man who so nobly rescued us from a watery grave."

The spinster uttered a low shriek, started back, and held up her hands, while every feature expressed horror and consternation.

"Good heavens! parson Trust. You can not mean it!" she gasped. "Oh, dear! oh, dear! I knew that girl would be the death of me! I knew—"

"Hold, madam," he interrupted, "I see no harm in this attachment. On the contrary, I think it is quite proper. He is a noble young man, and she is a good girl. Yea, verily, I could not imagine two persons who are better matched—better fitted to make each other happy!"

"But he is not worth a cent, that I heard of!" exclaimed Miss Trundle, "not a farthing. How are they going to live? He is a wanderer, a hermit, a sort of cannibal! Oh, dear! dear! I could not bear for a moment the thought of her marrying such an odd young man!"

"I think, on the contrary, that he is quite an intelligent youth," said Trust; "and, besides," he added, in a solemn voice, "you must bear in mind, madam, that they love each other, and on that account, by the laws of our Savior, they should be united."

"But, oh, dear! oh, mercy! only think of his not being worth any property; his not having any—"

"Madam!" gently interrupted the parson, "your anxiety for the welfare of your niece does you credit, and allow me to inform you that he *has* property, or at least the use of it."

"And where is it, parson? Where is this property? I questioned him on a certain occasion, and he said he had none."

"Miss Trundle," answered Trust, with a meek smile, "his property is here in the Pacific Ocean. It is this *island*!"

The spinster shrieked.

"Yes, this island; this beautiful paradise, abounding in fruits and fishes; this lovely spot, far removed from the din and bustle of cities; from the whirl of business; from the—"

"Dear me!" interrupted Miss Trundle. "You don't mean to say that they wish to live *here*!"

"I do," he replied. "He has asked her to be his wife, and to remain with him here, and she has consented!"

"Why, parson Trust, this is shocking! This is terrible! Can it be that *you*, one of God's shepherds, approve of this plan?"

"And why not? They love each other, and I have no

doubt will be happy here. If they should tire of the place at some future time, they can leave it. Your niece has requested me to ask you if you will not live with them."

"Never!" shrieked Miss Trundle. "Oh, dear! dear! what an idea! I would not do so for the world! If they stay here they can not have *my* company! Were it not that *her* father on his death-bed made me promise not to oppose any attachment between her and one of the other sex, I should cut off my right hand before I would allow this thing to go any further. The heart of this young man may be good enough; but, oh, dear! dear! he is the last man I would have chosen for Minnie's husband!"

"Madam," said the parson, "permit me to say that I feel convinced he will make her a good partner. He is a worthy young man, and may God help them both!"

Here Miss Trundle burst into tears, and, with many heart-rending sobs, declared that she was "one of the most persecuted of women;" that *she* wouldn't oppose the marriage of her niece, as she had no right to do so, but that it *ought* to be opposed, however, with heart and soul; that the fact of its not being opposed would be the death of her!

The parson exerted himself to console her, and, attracted to the spot by her cries, Minnie came to assist him.

But the sight of her niece only seemed to add to Miss Trundle's distress, and it was a long time before she recovered sufficiently to dry her eyes.

"You will remain with us, will you not, dear aunt?"

"Never!" ejaculated Miss Trundle, in a hollow voice. "If you marry that man, you must take the consequences. But if you are a girl of common sense you will not *marry* him!"

Before Minnie could reply, her aunt started back with a loud scream, and pointed to a rock that projected into the water, a few yards from the spot where she stood.

The parson and the young girl followed the direction of her glance, but were unable to discover the cause of her alarm.

"I saw it plainly!" she gasped, "only for an instant, but I'm quite sure I was not mistaken. The moonlight fell directly upon it; it was a *brown cap*!"

Parson Trust sprung forward and looked behind the rock; but he saw nothing of Miss Trundle's apparition.

"You are nervous and excited," he said, when he came back; "your imagination deceived you."

"That *may* have been the case," she replied. "Oh, dear! oh, dear! I believe I am going crazy! The idea of this terrible marriage will be the death of me, yet! When is it to take place?"

"To-morrow morning," answered Trust, smiling benevolently upon Minnie.

Miss Trundle shrieked again; but, before she could utter a word of complaint, the arms of the pretty niece were thrown around her neck, and her cheeks pressed to the rough pea-jacket, which was still worn by the spinster.

Minnie loved her aunt in spite of the latter's disagreeable temper, and she now strove to reconcile her to the marriage. But Miss Trundle would not be reconciled. She said she had no right to oppose the step Minnie was about to take; but, she looked upon it with unmitigated horror, and believed her niece was throwing herself away.

This somber view of the case, however, did not prevent her from making her appearance at the wedding on the next morning. The ceremony was performed in a little grove of bread-fruit trees, not far from the shores of the lake. Squint and Bolt gave three cheers when it was concluded, and danced a hornpipe in honor of the occasion. Every face, except Miss Trundle's, wore a pleasant smile. The parson shook hands with the two young people after he had united them, and tendered his heartfelt congratulations; but the spinster, who looked as though she had just witnessed a burial, merely stooped and imprinted an icy kiss upon the brow of her niece. Then, without saying a word, she marched off to her hut.

Seating herself upon a log she commenced to wail and sob in her usual manner; and all the efforts of her niece, who came soon after to console her, were of no avail. She continued her lamentations for several hours, when they were suddenly checked by a simultaneous cry from Squint and Bolt, who had mounted the little hill behind the huts.

"Sail, O!"

She sprung up, and, rushing from the shelter, found the parson upon his knees offering up thanks to God. Looking in another direction, she saw Squint and Bolt bounding down

the hill, waving their caps about their heads, and seeming almost intoxicated with joy.

Harmon Weldon advanced to meet them.

"How is she heading?" he inquired.

"Sou'-west, as near I can make out," replied the other; "but she is too far off to see our signals, and her course will soon carry her out of sight, if we don't take time by the forelock and cut her off, which we might do with your boat, by tacking—"

"Yea, verily, but the young man would lose his boat, if we did that," interrupted the parson, springing to his feet, "for it isn't likely the skipper of the ship would be willing to spare the time which would be required to bring the little craft to the island, after we should have been picked up."

Weldon had begun to reflect upon the matter, when the shrill voice of Miss Trundle burst upon his ear.

"Oh, dear! dear! it can make no difference to him—the loss of his boat. For the love of heaven, let us get away from this heathenish island!"

"You can have the boat!" exclaimed Weldon. "Ay, ay! you can have it! I would lose a hundred boats," he added, mentally, "for the sake of getting rid of that troublesome woman!"

Squint suddenly twisted his forelock, and glanced uneasily at Miss Trundle.

"You are a-goin' to stay here with the young couple, ma'am, are you not?" he inquired.

"Why, good heavens! no, *indeed*. It would be the death of me! Oh, Lord! Lord! What an idea!"

"We might be a long time reaching the ship, ma'am!" exclaimed Bolt, "which might be the cause of injuring your health, besides which, the boat might get swamped!"

"Yea, verily," said the parson, "we may be upon the sea several days; so I think, madam, you had better remain upon the island; at least, until you have a better opportunity of leaving it."

"I differ with you, my friends," said Weldon. "I think Miss Trundle will be perfectly safe in the boat, and that you will succeed in reaching the ship before night."

"Danger or no danger!" shrieked the spinster, "I will go! I *must* go!"

The parson sneezed; Squint and Bolt looked uneasy.

"Permit me, ma'am," said the dapper tar, "to beg that you won't. Just think of our feelin's if any thing *should* happen to you. A gale might come on, before we get to the craft, and the seas a-sweeping upon you would wet you through, and give you your death of cold."

"To say nothin' of bein' drowned, ma'am," put in Bolt, "which would be very likely, seein' as the rollin' of the boat might cause you to pitch overboard."

"In my opinion she will be in no kind of danger," said Weldon. "The boat is a swift one; there is no sign of a gale at present; and, even if there were, you would reach the ship before it came on to blow!"

"I don't care what happens. My mind is made up to go, and if I get drowned it will be Minnie's fault! Never can I forgive that ungrateful girl for what she has done!"

So saying, she seized the parson's arm.

"Lead me to the boat at once!" she continued. "I am ready. I have nothing to pack up; I can leave at a moment's notice!"

Trust and the two tars still exerted themselves to persuade her to remain, but all in vain; they were finally obliged to yield to her wishes.

She was conducted to the boat, in which she seated herself, refusing to embrace her niece, who came to bid her farewell, and only replying with a cold nod to her parting words and good-wishes.

"God bless you both!" cried the parson, as he squeezed the hands of Weldon and his bride, "and may you ever be as happy as you are now!"

"Ay, ay!" cried Bolt, "and I say the same. Weldon is no lubber, and his wife is an angel. Both of them deserve good luck!"

Squint expressed himself in a similar manner, after which the three men entered the boat, and, stepping the mast, proceeded to set the sail. This was soon done, and the little craft was then seen careering away from the island, on the starboard tack. Harmon and his fair bride stood upon the beach watching

it until it had become a mere speck upon the broad ocean. Then Weldon drew the young girl closely to his bosom, and kissed from her cheeks the tears that had been called forth by the coldness of her aunt at parting.

"Calm yourself, my sweet bride; we are now by ourselves. Your aunt can no longer wound your feelings. Forget her and be happy."

And Minnie dried her eyes and smiled, as she nestled her head upon the broad bosom of her husband. Afterward they mounted the little hill, from which they continued to watch the boat until it could no longer be seen. Before sunset, Weldon perceived by means of a small ship's glass, which was one of the prizes found on the raft, that the ship was lying-to. Soon after, her yards were again braced forward, and he knew that the party in the boat had been picked up. The shades of night at length hid the vessel from his view, and, with his young wife, he descended the hill. As they were approaching their hut, Minnie suddenly started on hearing a rustling noise in a clump of shrubbery near the right bank of the lake.

Harmon laughed, and pressed her waist protectingly with the arm that encircled it.

"Do not be afraid," he said; "the noise you heard was merely caused by some bird, or perhaps by the falling of a cocoanut among the bushes."

"I am foolish to allow myself to be so easily alarmed," she replied, "and I will try to be more brave in future."

On the afternoon of the next day the young couple were walking slowly along the beach, when Harmon's foot striking against something upon the sand sent it flying before him, and he was astonished, on obtaining a nearer view, to discover that it was the bowl of an old clay pipe!

"Was it not yours?" inquired Minnie, noticing his look of perplexity; "have I not seen you have one very much like it?"

"No," he replied, smilingly, "the one I use is a small meer-schaum—a present from a friend. This, as you can perceive, is of clay, and I am at a loss to imagine who has been using it. It has been smoked recently," he added, picking up the bowl and examining it; "there is still some tobacco adhering—"

"I have it," interrupted Minnie, clapping her hands and laughing gleefully, "it belonged either to Squint or Bolt. You forget that they smoked."

Harmon shook his head doubtfully.

"Each of those two men smoked a brierwood," said he "but," he added, perceiving that she now looked alarmed, "they may have had clay-pipes too."

He threw the pipe-bowl into the water, and they continued their walk; but Minnie could not help noticing that he seemed a little more thoughtful than usual.

They had not proceeded far, when she suddenly stopped, and clutching his arm, pointed toward a small rock that rose from the shrubbery on their left.

"Dear Harmon," she faltered, "I was not mistaken this time—I am *sure* I was not; I saw it plainly, a *brown cap*! I don't think my aunt was deceived, after all!"

Harmon started and looked puzzled.

"Surely there can be no person besides ourselves upon this island!" he exclaimed, "and yet," he added, smiling in the midst of his perplexity, "if there is a brown cap here, there must be a human head under it! Wait here for me, my little wife," he continued, as he darted into the shrubbery; "this mystery must be solved without delay."

He hurried swiftly on and soon caught a glimpse of the brown cap as its owner glided through the tall bushes far ahead of him. Much astonished, he quickened his pace; but he had not proceeded much further when the cap suddenly disappeared from his view.

He continued his way, however, for a quarter of an hour longer, when, hearing the low murmur of voices in earnest conversation, he stopped. He now stood upon the edge of a little valley, the sides of which being fringed with shrubbery prevented him from seeing the speakers, who were evidently seated, somewhere ahead of him.

Crouching upon his hands and knees, he crept cautiously forward until he suddenly beheld three men reclining upon the grass on an open space of ground; two of them smoking, and the other carelessly fingering the handle of a long sheath-knife stuck in a leathern belt about his waist. Though their faces were partially turned from him, Weldon saw enough of them

to convince him that they were very rough and unprepossessing. Their beards were long and grizzly, their hair uncombed, and the gray shirt and pants worn by each looked as though they had not been washed for several weeks. Upon the head of one of these men Weldon saw the *brown cap*. Its owner evidently was unconscious that he had been pursued. He was lying upon his back, laughing in a silent but hearty manner at some observation made by one of his companions.

"I tell you what, Bill Choke," he said, after having indulged his mirth to his satisfaction, "it's amusin' enough—the idea of us three—convicts at that—stumbling upon this island which that young lubber—accordin' to what I heard the parson say, t'other night—thinks is *his* property. It's very amusin', too, to think of that pretty gal which has *married* the young lubber!"

"You are sure, Tom, of what you told us last night, ain't you?" inquired one of the men, addressing the wearer of the brown cap. "You are sure that they've all left the island exceptin' the young man and his wife?"

"Why of course I am, Clark. Didn't I see it all last night; the sailing away in the whale boat and all? How can I help bein' sure. Besides, I've jist been on another scout, and I seen the young couple a-walking along the beach as loving as two turtle-doves, which they wouldn't have had much chance of doing previding that old prying she-bear in the pea-jacket had been around."

"Well, we *have* got into good quarters—there's no disputin' that p'int!" exclaimed Choke, "and you may all thank me for it. It was all through my acquaintance with the steward of that blamed ship, that we got our handcuffs and chains taken off just as we were a-passin' this island, on the night before the gale. But, if I hadn't jumped through the port-hole and taken the lead, blow me, if I think the rest of you would have attempted it!"

"It was nat'ral that we should feel a little doubtful," replied Tom, "seein' as *we* didn't know the steward. When he said the island was less than a league distant, how did we know but what he had made some lubberly mistake, and that the shore was too far off to be reached by swimming!"

"We must have been missed the next morning," said Bill,

"and I can't imagine why the marines warn't sent for us, as they must have guessed that we swum ashore, unless the steward blinded their eyes with some story which gave 'em an idea that we committed suicide by drowning ourselves, sooner than to be carried to Botany Bay."

"Or p'raps," said Clark, "the ship foundered in the gale the next night. It was a-blowin' awful, and there ain't many ships that could weather sich a tempest!"

"Well, here we are at any rate—safe and snug," cried Tom, "and now the question is, what is to be done with that young cove. His male friends have all left him, and it 'ud be an easy matter to pounce upon him and squeeze the breath out of his body, after which we might take possession of his widow."

"I don't exactly like the idea of killin' him," said Bill. "Suppose we set him adrift on the raft."

"Ay, and have him picked up afterwards p'raps, and blow on us, getting us all muzzled again!" cried Tom.

"Dead men tells no tales!" exclaimed the other two, simultaneously; "he must die!"

"That's my way of thinking," said Tom, "for d'ye see, it won't do to have him here spying on us."

"Well, boys, what say you—it is agreed on, isn't it?" inquired Bill, "we are to make way with the young man! I'm sorry myself, but I don't see as it can be helped."

"Ay, ay, he must die!" gruffly responded the others.

"Which will be to-night," added the wearer of the brown cap. "Two of us can creep into his hut and settle him with knives; or one of us can use this," he added, drawing a pistol from his pocket. "This useful instrument, which was given to us by the steward."

"I hope *I* shan't be one of them that's picked out to do this disagreeable business!" cried Bill; "it isn't exactly in my line."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Tom. "You're like a sick old woman. The young man has got to die some time; he may as well die first as last. That's *logic*!"

Weldon did not wait to hear more. Alarmed more on Minnie's account than his own, he hurried to the spot where he had left her and drew her closely to his bosom.

She noticed the troubled expression of his face.

"You have seen something to trouble you!" she cried. Speak! dear husband—let me know the worst, at once!"

"Ay," he replied, in a sorrowful voice, "I had not dreamed of any thing happening to trouble us, here. But it seems that brutes, having the form of men, have even penetrated to this 'Garden of Eden,' in which I had hoped we would be secure from intrusion."

He gently drew her in the direction of the huts, and as they moved along, described the three men he had seen and related their conversation.

"I thought it best to tell you the truth," he added, "for it could not have been concealed from you a great while."

"I will die with you!" exclaimed the young wife, throwing her arms around his neck; "we shall never be separated."

"We must not talk of dying yet," replied Harmon; "perhaps I may succeed in baffling those three wretches."

"What can you do? The boat is gone and we can not get away on the raft."

"You are mistaken, Minnie, about the raft. I have a couple of oars and a large piece of canvas with which I could easily rig a sail. With the breeze which is now blowing, the sail would soon carry us out to sea."

"Oh, how fortunate!" exclaimed Minnie, "that you took the precaution to secure this raft. I do not see, after all, as we are so badly off," she added, with a cheerful smile. "A bag of sea-biscuit and a little fruit, with a keg of fresh water, carried with us, will last us a long time."

"But I am not willing to be driven from the island in any such manner!" cried Weldon; "those rascals have no more right to it than I have. I think, by a little maneuvering, I can overpower them."

"Oh, no! no!" interrupted his wife, in a beseeching tone. "You are too confident. You will certainly be slain, for what can you do against three men?"

"Be it as you wish, my little wife! We will take to the raft. But, I shall not go out of sight of the island. I shall keep it in view all the time that we are afloat."

"Then the men may swim out to us," said Minnie. "You did not think of that."

"Oh no—I shall keep too far from the island for them to

reach us," he answered, "and all the time I shall be on the look-out for a vessel. If I see one, I shall signal it, and report our situation to its crew if they come to us. The convicts will then be captured and carried aboard the vessel, and we will find ourselves in peaceful possession of the island. But you may have to endure a great deal of hardship," he sorrowfully added, "before this happens."

"And what is hardship to me, so long as *you* are with me!" she exclaimed, looking brightly up into his face; "I shall scarcely heed it."

He wound an arm around her waist, and stooping, kissed her several times.

"You encourage me," he said, "and I shall never tire of thanking Providence for bringing me such a wife."

A bright blush mantled her cheek, and her eyes beamed upon him like stars.

"And I too!" she exclaimed, in a voice of emotion, "I am blessed with such a husband!"

The sun had set, and the shadows of twilight were beginning to steal over the island landscape, and over the rippling waters of the sea. Weldon gently disengaged himself from the arms of his young bride, not daring any longer to give way to the emotions that agitated his heart; for no time was to be lost in making the preparations for departure.

A bag of biscuit—the only one left of the three which had been lashed to the raft, was now placed upon the floating platform, together with several large bunches of bananas, some cooked bread-fruit, and several pounds of cooked beef.

Then one of the oars which had been taken from the boat before it left the island, was secured with ropes to the middle of the raft, in such a way as to form quite a respectable mast.

Another was fastened crossways to it so as to answer the purposes of a yard; and the canvas being bent in soon after, the young couple were ready to sail. The rope which held the raft was accordingly unfastened, and the latter slowly—almost imperceptibly—glided from the shore.

CHAPTER V.

MISFORTUNE.

"We are safe!" cried Minnie, joyfully.

"Ay, ay, and may we soon be able to return to the island," cried Harmon. "I hardly like the idea of running away from those ruffians in this manner. But I suppose it is the best plan."

"I am quite sure it is," replied Minnie. "By staying on land we would certainly be captured before a great while."

Weldon was about to reply, when his quick eye caught sight of a figure which suddenly appeared upon the summit of a low rock not far from the beach. It was not yet too dark to see the brown cap upon the head of this "apparition."

He gave a loud shout on seeing the raft and its occupants, and appeared on the beach a moment after, accompanied by his two friends.

"Halloa! halloa, there!" he shouted, "where are you bound?"

"That's my own affair!" retorted Weldon.

"No, I'm blowed if it is!" roared the wearer of the brown cap. "I want you to come back. Hope you ain't thinking that we intend to harm you, notwithstanding!"

"I am not anxious for your company," retorted Weldon. "I know all about you. You are escaped convicts; a set of cowardly rascals who would pounce upon one man and take his life, without giving him a chance to defend himself!"

"Thank ye!" cried Tom; "but you should bear in mind that, seeing as you've got to die some time, you might as well die first as last. That's logic! I think you must have been a-spyin' around," he added, "to find out so much about us."

Not caring to bandy further words with the ruffian, Harmon seized a paddle and increased the speed of the raft by paddling first on one side and then on the other.

"You seem in a mighty hurry to get out of our sight,"

continued Tom, from the beach, "and, blow me if it's to my taste! There's no need of it, I can assure you! I give you my word—we all give you our word—that we won't offer you harm."

Perceiving, however, that Harmon took no notice of the remark, the three men held a rapid consultation in a low voice, after which they threw off their shoes and hats.

"Oh, my God, husband!" gasped Minnie, in a terrified voice, "they are going to swim to us!"

"Fear nothing!" answered Weldon, as he snatched up the hatchet which he had not neglected to bring away with him; "they will not find it an easy matter to board us, if I know myself!"

"Alas! what can you do against the whole three?" cried his wife. "Each of them can approach from a different direction."

In fact the men had no sooner plunged into the water than they separated, hoping in this way to gain each side of the raft at once.

The clumsy vessel was now about fifty yards from the beach, and its speed, not being equal to that of the swimmer, Weldon calculated that they would reach him before long, provided the breeze did not freshen.

Dexterously keeping the raft before the wind by the constant use of the paddle, he glanced alternately at his little sail and the grim faces of the men in the water.

"The wind is freshening as we leave the lee of the land," he said at length; "cheer up, Minnie; there's a chance of our escaping, yet."

"God grant that we may," she answered; "but, it seems to me that they are fast approaching us."

"They are still twenty yards from us," he said. "Oh! if I only had a rifle or a lance!"

"Which not being the case," exclaimed Tom, who overheard the remark, "makes all the difference in the world. We will show you no mercy when we get aboard of you—that's certain! Strike out, my lads, strike out!"

The three men exerted themselves to the utmost, and very soon the foremost swimmer—who, as it happened, was Bill Choke—found himself within ten feet of the raft. Hatchet

in hand, our hero sprung to the edge of the platform, ready to oppose him, when he suddenly wheeled round and struck out for the shore! Surprised by this maneuver, Harmon was still staring at the receding figure, when his shrill warning cry rung far along the waters!

"Sharks! sharks!" shouted the man, at the top of his voice; "a whole school of 'em bearing down upon us! Swim for your lives—swim for the beach! They'll be upon you before you can get to the raft!"

Weldon looked around him in every direction, but could see nothing of the dreaded monsters. The man had either made a mistake or had purposely raised a false alarm, in order to save the young sailor's life. Whatever may have been the cause of the outcry, it is certain that it was successful in frightening the other swimmers. Panic-stricken—their eyes protruding from their sockets—their hair fairly bristling on their heads, they turned at once and struck out for the beach.

"Surely this is an interposition of Providence!" cried Minnie, throwing herself upon her husband's bosom, with tears of joy in her soft eyes. "And yet," she added, glancing around her, "I can see nothing of the sharks."

"The man probably made a mistake," said Weldon. "I think he was deceived by the twilight shadows quivering yonder among the ripples. And now," he continued, glancing at the sail, "the wind has freshened, and we will be far away from those rascals before they think of making another attempt to reach us."

They watched the receding swimmers until they were swallowed up in the deepening shadows; then Weldon continued to ply his paddle, while his little wife, seizing another, playfully assisted him.

Soon after, the moon came up, lighting the sea and the beautiful shores of the island.

"How far are we from the land?" inquired Minnie.

"About half a league!" he answered. "In less than an hour we will be as far from it as I care to go."

When the time he mentioned had expired, he threw down his paddle.

"There, my little wife," said he, "we are now about a league and a half from our island; and I must try to keep

that distance, which I can do provided we are not carried off by a gale. You must feel tired and sleepy by this time."

"Oh no," she answered, "not yet; but when are *you* going to sleep? It seems to me that you had better take a nap now, while I sit up awhile and keep watch."

"I will do all the watching," he answered, smiling, "for the sail must be trimmed occasionally, and you wouldn't know how to do it. I shall, however, be able to catch a nap now and then."

"But you can show me how to trim the sail."

"You are not enough of a sailor for that," he replied, laughing. "You could never learn."

"And so it seems I can do nothing to help you," she said, in a disappointed tone. "I was in hopes that I could at least take my turn in watching. Oh, I would be so glad to do it."

"Well, then," said he, "there will be times when the sail will not need trimming. Then you may watch if you like."

This seemed to make her very happy. She sat up until the night was far advanced, and then fell asleep upon the rough bed of canvas which he had prepared for her.

A little after midnight she woke, and raising her head from the pea-jacket that served for a pillow, she perceived that the breeze had died away, leaving the sea as smooth as a mirror.

"You can have nothing to do with your sail now, Sir Hermit," she playfully observed to her husband as she rose, "and therefore you will permit me to relieve the watch."

"You have not slept enough yet," he answered.

"Yes I have. I feel very much refreshed," cried Minnie. "I will hear no excuses. So, tell me what I am to do, and go to sleep."

"Well, then, if you insist, I suppose you must have your way," said Harmon. "All that you have to do is to sit here by the mast, and look toward the island. If you see any thing suspicious, wake me up at once."

"Very well; and now, having given your orders, you can go into the cabin."

He laughed, and throwing himself upon the canvas, soon dropped to sleep.

A few minutes after, the moon was partially obscured by a mass of clouds, which, for some time, had been gradually

spreading over the western sky. Minnie could now scarcely see the island; only the faint outline of the higher land was visible. She rose, hoping to obtain a better view; but the shadows, deepening around her, soon veiled every portion of the isle from her sight.

The sea, however, still being calm, she did not think it necessary to wake her husband. She felt pleased to hear his quiet breathing, which betokened that his sleep was sound, and she hoped that he would enjoy his slumber until sunrise.

Returning to her station by the little mast, she fell into a train of pleasing reflections, which she indulged for about an hour, when she suddenly sprung up and stood in an attitude of attention. A low, cautious whistling, as of some person signaling to another, was borne to her ears. She peered eagerly through the darkness, and, to her astonishment and dismay, beheld the faint outline of cocoanut trees not more than a quarter of a mile distant.

"Good heavens!" she muttered, "I have kept but a poor look-out. Unperceived by me, the raft has drifted almost to the beach with the in-shore current! And then that signal! It came from the shore!"

She shrieked as a dark head suddenly emerged to view, within ten feet of her position. Then she sprung toward her husband; but her cry had already awakened him, and he was now sitting up, glancing round in a bewildered manner.

"Harmon, dear Harmon," she cried, "we are close to the shore, and some one is swimming toward us!"

"You must be mistaken, Minnie," he said. "You must not allow yourself to be so easily frightened, poor child. The shore is more than a league distant."

She perceived that he was only half awake.

"No, no," she cried, putting a hand upon his shoulder, "the raft has drifted toward the shore since you fell asleep, and—"

Thoroughly aroused at last, Weldon sprung to his feet, to confront Bill Choke, who had just climbed upon the floating platform.

"Hist!" whispered the convict, as Harmon stooped to grasp his hatchet. "Don't be alarmed, and don't be a-making any noise. I've come to assist you."

"*You!*" exclaimed the young sailor, much surprised. "I overheard you say—"

"Ay, ay," interrupted Bill, "you heard me speak to them other two as if I was willing to side in with their plans. But it was only done, upon my word—though p'raps you think the word of a convict don't amount to much—in order to blind 'em so that I might help you and yours. I have committed crimes, in my time," he added, "but murder was never among 'em. The crimes I have been guilty of, d'ye see, was caused by my being led into temptation by them that was older than me and ought to have known better. Still, I'm far from being a good man, and I knows it, though I may get reformed after a while. Certain it is, hows'ever, that I haven't the heart to disturb a couple like you, and am determined to help you out of your scrape; and in order that you may know I ain't deceivin' you, I will begin by giving you this."

And taking Wilkes' pistol from his pocket, he presented it to the young man.

"It's loaded and capped," he remarked, "and with that in your possession you are master of the island."

"Thank you! thank you!" cried Harmon. "I certainly can no longer doubt your good faith. But, how did you contrive to get hold of this weapon?"

"I took it from the pocket of one of my companions. Both are asleep in the hut nearest to the lake."

"I will go at once and order them off the island!" cried Harmon. "I will force *them* to take to the raft."

"Wait a minute," said Bill—"wait till I have crawled back to the hut and laid down. I don't want my comrades to think that I've had any hand in this bizness."

Weldon eyed the man suspiciously. "I am at a loss to understand this!" he exclaimed. "If you are as anxious to help me as you have declared, why do you—"

"I know what you would say," interrupted Bill. "But you wrong me by your 'suspiciousness;' upon my word you do. My reason for not wishing them other two to know what I've been about is, that if they did they'd certainly pitch upon me and murder me after we got aboard the raft."

"Why not remain on the island? *You* need not be in a hurry to quit it. We will probably see a sail before long—"

"No—no," interrupted Bill, glancing toward Minnie. "I'm certain that your wife, and you too, would like to get rid of the company of a convict, at once. I ain't fit for the society of honest people, d'ye see, and I knows it."

There was an unfeigned sadness in his tone which touched the hearts of the young couple, and quelled their suspicions at once.

"Forgive me!" cried Harmon, grasping his hand. "I can doubt your word no longer. My wife and I will be glad to have you stay upon the island as long as—"

"It's no use," again interrupted Bill, with a sad smile. "I never yet saw two that was married, that wouldn't rather be alone, and I'm much obliged to you for bein' so benevolent and unselfish-like, as to be willin' to go against your own wishes, for the sake of helping a poor fellow that hasn't had a friend in the world, and has always shifted for himself, since he was a youngster."

So saying, he sprung into the water, and, wading ashore, disappeared in the darkness.

Soon after, the raft touched the beach, and Harmon assisted Minnie to land.

"Now then," whispered the young sailor, joyfully, "we will soon be in peaceful possession of the island."

"I hope so," she answered, "but, I am afraid to have you confront those two lawless men. They might contrive to disarm you before—"

"Fear nothing!" interrupted Harmon. "The pistol is a double-barreled one. The rascals are in my power!"

He conducted her to a clump of shrubbery a few yards from the nearest hut.

"You will wait for me here, Minnie."

"No, I will accompany you," she said, resolutely, "so that if you should get wounded or injured in any way I may be near to help you."

He made no objection, and the two gained the hut occupied by the convicts.

Choke already had contrived to waken his two companions, and all were sitting up when Harmon appeared.

"Avast there!" cried Tom Wilkes, who was the first to catch a glimpse of the young man's figure. "Who is that?"

And the three men rushed from the hut.

"The sooner you leave this island, the better," said Harmon, pointing his weapon toward them.

"Well, blast me!" cried Wilkes, recoiling, "if it isn't that young lubber with his wife. He has stolen a march on us! I hadn't any suspicions of his being armed, though," he added, as he felt in his pocket for his pistol. His astonishment may be imagined when he discovered that it was gone.

"Leave the island at once, I say, or you are dead men!" said Harmon, sternly. "The raft is ready for you, alongside of the beach!"

"We'd better go," suggested Bill Choke—"seeing as we haven't any arms to resist with."

"What! three men run away from one!" cried Wilkes; "that goes mightily against my conscience. We've got to die some time, and may as well die first as last; *that's* logic!"

"Ay, ay!" cried Clark, "that's always your way of talking, and at the same time you're never in a hurry to act up according to it. If you'll take my advice," he added, drawing his knife, "the whole three of us will make a rush at this youngster. It's likely one or perhaps two will drop when he fires, but—"

"Ay, ay, p'raps three!" cried Bill Choke.

Clark uttered a contemptuous grunt and thrust his knife into his belt.

"I'm not anxious to do any thing unless I'm backed," said he. "What d'ye say, men—will you help me, or will you not?" he added, turning to his companions.

"To throw ourselves upon a loaded pistol," said Choke, "would be acting like madmen; that's *my* way of thinking."

"And, though I believe that we may all as well die first as last," cried Wilkes, "I ain't in favor of anybody's dying for nothin,' which would be the case if we 'attackled' the youngster under present circumstances."

"If yon don't leave in another minute, I shall fire," said Harmon. "Your best policy, if you'll take my advice, is to go at once."

"You've got the better of us this time," growled Wilkes, "but if we ever get you into our clutches—"

"I care not to bandy words with a man of your stamp," in-

interrupted Harmon. "Away to the raft this instant, you hounds!" he added, advancing, "your time is up! Away, I say!"

Wilkes turned sullenly, and, followed by his two comrades, moved to the beach. The three soon were upon the raft, paddling away from the shore.

"A fine pickle we are in now," said Wilkes, turning to Clark. "If I'd only had my weapon—and it's a mystery to me what can have become of it—we'd soon have settled that young lubber."

"The pistol in the hand of that 'young lubber,'" said Bill, turning aside his head to conceal a smile, "looked mighty like yours, as well as I could see in the dark."

"Ay, ay!" cried Wilkes—"now you speak of it—that same idea crossed my mind, but I put it down at once, as it isn't at all probable that—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Clark. "He might have stolen into the hut easy enough while we were asleep and have taken it. It can make little difference, hows'ever," he added, "for, blast me, if I think the weapon in your hand would have done much good."

"What do you mean?" Wilkes angrily inquired.

"I mean that, in spite of your logic about dying first as well as last, you're one of the biggest cowards that ever walked!" answered Clark.

Wilkes dropped his paddle and drew his knife; but before he could use it the hand of the other was upon his throat, and his knee upon his breast.

"There!" he exclaimed, with a hoarse laugh, "there you be in my power, and I've a strong temptation to take your life."

He pulled his knife from its sheath as he spoke and lifted it to deal the fatal blow, when his arm was grasped by Choke.

"Hold!" exclaimed the latter. "Remember the oath we made aboard the transport to keep together. Besides, what good will it do you to shed our comrade's blood. His arm is needed to help us work the paddles."

With a sullen grunt, Clark let go his hold of the prostrate man, and sprung to his feet.

"Ay, ay, Bill," said he, "you're right: it isn't worth while to take his life, after all."

"We'll settle this dispute some other time," said Wilkes, seizing his paddle. "You're the biggest, it's true, but there'll have to be some desp'rate fighting before you get the best of me. A man may as well die first as last. That's *my* logic!"

Clark turned his back to the speaker, and laughed contemptuously.

"We shall see—we shall see," he replied, "although I for one haven't a high opinion of your 'pluck.'"

The raft finally disappeared from the gaze of the happy couple, who had been watching it from the beach.

"Thank God, dear husband, we are at last left in peaceful possession of our beautiful island!" cried Minnie, clapping her hands.

"Ay, ay, thanks to that man Choke," answered Harmon, kissing his bride. "He certainly was a singular character for a convict," he added, thoughtfully. "Whatever may have been the crime for which he was condemned, he has acted in a praiseworthy manner by us, and I trust he will eventually forsake his ruffian associates and lead the life of an honest man."

"I shall never forget to pray for him with my whole heart and soul!" said Minnie.

"We both owe him a debt of gratitude, which I am afraid we may never have a chance to repay," replied Weldon.

"And now," said the young wife, "you had better go to one of the huts and finish your nap, which was so unceremoniously interrupted aboard the raft. I will remain here to watch."

"No—no," answered Harmon. "It is your turn to sleep. I will keep a look-out, as I am more experienced in that business than you are."

"Very well, if you *won't* go to sleep we will both remain here until morning, as two pair of eyes are better than one. But, do you really think the convicts will return?"

"No," answered Harmon; "but it is as well to be vigilant."

They seated themselves upon a rock, and kept a steady look-out until daylight, when they ascended a lofty hill and swept the ocean with curious glances.

They saw nothing of the raft, but far upon the eastern seaboard they beheld a speck, which Harmon declared to be a sail.

CHAPTER VII.

ON BOARD.

WE will now return to our four friends, Miss Trundle, Parson Trust, and the two seamen, Squint and Bolt.

As we have already hinted, they succeeded in reaching the ship in the offing. They were received by the captain, a rather unamiable-looking personage, wearing a heavy pea-jacket, a long pair of sea-boots, a wide rimmed tarpaulin and canvas trowsers.

The expression of his face might be compared to that of an old sea-lion, if one could imagine a sea-lion with a chew of tobacco in its mouth. The face was very broad, with little wrinkles diverging from the outer corners of the eyes, and other wrinkles covering the forehead. The eyes were of a light blue, and looked as hard as marbles. They gleamed with an expression of satisfaction, however, as their owner scanned the neat, active figures of Squint and Bolt.

"Dear me!" muttered Miss Trundle, "what a queer-looking man! His eyes are like a duck's, and he has red hair too!"

"Are you the captain of this vessel?" inquired the parson.

"Ay, ay, Captain Bunt's my name," growled the other. "And hark ye!" he added, directing suspicious glances upon the parson's soiled broadcloth and the green pea-jacket worn by Miss Trundle, "hark ye! it's the name of an honest man that sails an honest ship!"

"Of course," answered the parson, with a meek smile, "one glance at your face would convince any judge of physiognomy that you are an honest man."

"Why, blast it!" roared Bunt, stamping upon the deck with each boot in succession, "blast it, if I don't think you've an idea that I was trying to defend my own character; but I can tell ye that you're on the wrong tack—ay, ay, on the wrong tack altogether," he added, bringing his fist upon the capstan with great force, "seeing as it's them disguises of your'n that

brought out the remark. I don't take anybody aboard *my* ship that sails under false colors!"

"Disguises! False colors!" stammered the parson. "I don't understand you."

"You don't know that some convicts lately escaped from a transport, eh!—don't ye? You don't know that, don't ye? Ay, ay, sartainly not!"

And the captain thrust both hands beneath his waistbands, and eyed the parson narrowly.

"You are right," answered the latter, "we have heard nothing about it."

"Right! I know I'm right!" cried Bunt, "which means that you know *every thing* about it. If you and the others ain't them convicts, then I'm no judge of human natur'!"

"Oh, dear! dear!" screamed Miss Trundle, "the idea of our being taken for convicts! It's an insult—an insult to *me*, and I call upon somebody for protection!"

"Captain Bunt!" exclaimed the first officer, stepping forward, "I think you *are* mistaken. If I remember right, they were *men*—there wasn't any woman in the case—who escaped from the transport."

"Ay, ay, Mr. Spike, I know *that*," replied the skipper; "the transport's captain spoke plain enough to be understood, seeing as we wasn't more than ten fathoms apart when his ship crossed our wake; but how d'ye know, how do *I* know, that this is a woman?" he added, pointing to Miss Trundle. "I never saw sich a rig as that before on one of t'other sex: blow me, if I don't feel quite sartain that it's a man in disguise!"

"Hear him!" shrieked the spinster; "oh, dear! oh, *dear*! what an insult! Won't somebody scratch his face? Won't somebody tear his eyes out?"

"She's a woman," said the mate, after he had scrutinized her for some time, "ay, ay, she's a woman, Captain Bunt!"

"Thank ye, Spike," said the shipper, "I wouldn't a' b'lieved it if you hadn't said so; but I have perfect faith in your judgment, seeing as you've had some experience with them that wears gowns."

The story of the shipwreck, the rescue, etc., etc., was then related by the parson, and listened to by Bunt with indifference if not with contempt.

"Hark ye," said he, when it was concluded, "I may as well tell ye first as last that I don't believe more than half of your yarn. A clargyman would never have weathered it out in the water as you say you did; them kind is always the first to go down, seeing as they are always a-praying, and in praying, they open their mouths so that the salt-water rushes in and suffocates 'em, d'ye see, the first thing. I dushn't pretend to know who ye are, what ye are, nor from where ye came, but blast me if I don't make every man of ye keep his eye open while aboard my ship!"

"Ay, ay," said Spike, "we're short-handed, and can turn 'em all to advantage. There's new cat-lines to set up in the weather fore shrouds, and the decks need a good scourin'."

"For'ard ye go then, you lubbers!" cried Bunt, "for'ard into the fo'castle, and get ready to stand watch."

"If I may be so bold, sir," said Bolt, "I'd suggest to you that this man *is* a *clergyman*," pointing to Trust, "and one of them that has much benevolence too. *He* knows nothing of sailorizing."

"None of that!" roared Bunt, "I tell ye there's nothing of the clargy about him. The clargy doesn't associate with wimmen that wears pea-jackets—remember that, my man; so away ye go, for'ard, and I'll find a use for the whole school of ye!"

"Why, dear me!" cried Miss Trundle, as she was conducted into the cabin, "this is perfectly shocking; sending the parson forward among the common sailors."

"That will do, ma'am," said Bunt, with a grin. "I shan't swallow that about his being a clargyman! No—no—not a bit of it."

Making no reply to her angry protestations, he showed her the way to the state-room, and then ascended to the deck.

An hour after, Squint and the parson were stationed on the bows to keep a look-out, and Bolt relieved the man at the wheel.

"My friend," said Trust, turning to his companion, "do you really think the captain of this ship intends to put me to hard work?"

"Yes, sir, if I know him right, he ain't one of the kind to go ag'in his word. He'll have you a-washin' down the deck, in the morning, p'r'aps doing something aloft."

"And I understand nothing—positively nothing, of—"

He was interrupted by Mr. Spike, the first officer.

"Lay out there upon the boom, and furl that jib!" he shouted, springing upon the fore hatch.

"Did you speak to me?" inquired Trust!

"Did I speak to you?—why blast your eyes, yes!" cried Spike. "Away you go and furl that sail; and you," he added, addressing a couple of Kanakas, "go out and help him."

"I—I—really—I understand nothing about furling sails," said Trust; "I—"

"None of that!" roared the mate. "I won't have any shirking aboard this craft. D'ye hear?"

"Beggin' your pardon sir," said Squint, jumping from the windlass, "this man knows nothing of sailorizing. I'll go in his place!"

"No you don't!" exclaimed Spike, "not a bit of it. If he knows nothing as you say, he's got to l'arn, and may as well begin first as last. Come, bear a hand!" he added, turning impatiently to the parson.

Accordingly the latter, with much difficulty, made his way to the boom. The motion of the two Kanakas, however, caused the footrope to shake so violently, that he was obliged to cling to the spar with both arms to prevent himself from falling.

"Ho! ho!" cried one of the Kanakas, "what good you do out here, me like to know? You too much in de way, you know nothing, and so best go back."

"Really, my friend," answered Trust, "if you stop jerking this rope we are standing upon, I will assist you as well as I can."

"Hi! hi! hi!" laughed the islander, "me t'ink you nebber make good sailor!"

"You right dere, Loki," said the other Kanaka, "he nebber make fit to work in ship."

"Ay, ay, Molo; but what for *you* stop working? Dis no time to stop, when only two men here dat's fit to furl sail."

"Me stop, and talk much as me like," answered Molo; "you not my officer, and best mind your own business."

"If you no work me *make* you work!" exclaimed Loki, with flashing eyes. "You s'pose me want to do all meself?"

"It no hurt you if you do. You soger (shirk) plenty at oder times to make up for it."

"Stop talk, or me knock you from de yard!" cried Loki.

"Me like to see you do dat!"

"My friends," said the parson, "for heaven's sake don't quarrel out here upon the boom; nay, quarrel not at all. You should strive to control your temper."

The Kanakas, however, were not in a mood to heed this good advice; they glared, each upon the other, like tigers preparing for a spring.

"If you say anudder word, you t'ick skull Loki," cried Molo, "me break you head, quick time!"

The last word had barely escaped him, when his dusky companion struck him full in the face with his clenched fist, almost knocking him from the boom.

Quickly recovering his balance, however, Molo returned the blow, and a desperate fight ensued.

Grasping the boom with one arm, each of the islanders battled with the other, dealing his blows with such rapidity, that the bewildered brain of the parson felt as if it were spinning round and round like a top.

"Friends! friends! this is really disgraceful," he exclaimed.

"Stop—I pray you—stop—I can not bear to see such work!"

But the combatants heeded him not. Fast and furiously they fought, yelling and screaming like tigers, and occasionally following up their blows with desperate kicks, that made the footrope swing like a pendulum.

Clinging to the spar with both arms, the unwilling spectator of this affray found it difficult to maintain his position, especially as he was obliged to dodge his head, now and then, to avoid the long and pointed elbows of the two pugilists. Moreover, his alarm was increased by the fist of the savage Molo, which, occasionally moving in erratic curves, would graze his nose before reaching its destination; while the swaying footrope, jerking his legs upward and downward, inspired him with the fear of being whirled head over heels into the sea beneath.

Once he glanced toward the deck, believing that some of the men would come and put a stop to the fight; but the grinning faces of the crowd of tars gathered about the bow, extin-

guished this hope. Even Mr. Spike was a delighted spectator of the affray, his weather-beaten face, towering above the Scotch caps and sou'westers of his men, being rippled all over with wrinkles of mirth.

"Fight it out, blast ye, now you've begun!" he shouted, "fight it out, and furl the sail when ye get through!"

"Oh, dear! dear! What does this mean? Where is the parson?" cried a shrill feminine voice, and glancing toward the bow, a second time, the parson beheld the familiar form of Miss Trundle, as she clambered upon the knighthead.

Discovering Trust upon the boom, the spinster clasped her hands and rolled up her eyes with horror.

"Oh, for heaven's sake, Mr. Spike!—go and bring in that unfortunate man. I wouldn't have believed it—no, no—I wouldn't have believed that he could remain quietly by, and see that disgraceful fight going on, without lifting a hand to separate the two savages!"

"Really, Miss Trundle!" shouted the parson, "you wrong me—upon my word. My hands and arms are not at liberty. It is as much as I can do to cling to this boom, so as to prevent myself from falling overboard!"

"Good gracious, then!" cried Miss Trundle, "why don't you come here?—why do you stay there?"

"I think if these two men would stop, I could get to the deck," answered Trust, "but it's impossible to do so with the footrope swaying as it is now."

"If you *do* go overboard!" exclaimed the spinster, in thrilling accents, "I will go after you—I will drown with you if *you* drown!"

Even as she spoke Loki received a blow that knocked him from the boom. He clutched the leg of the parson in his descent, pulling that worthy into the sea with him!

Miss Trundle uttered a piercing scream.

"You had better hold me—somebody, or I shall jump overboard, after *him*!" she cried. "Quick! quick!—oh, help! help! He is lost, and I shall go too."

"Back the main yard! clear away the quarter boat!" thundered Spike.

The order was promptly obeyed, and Miss Trundle found herself alone upon the knighthead.

"Oh Lord! Lord! I hope he'll be saved!" she exclaimed, descending to the deck. "If he isn't, my heart will certainly break!"

The boat was in the water moving swiftly toward the spot where the heads of the Kanaka and the parson were faintly distinguishable, "bobbing" up and down among the waves.

Both men were soon picked up and conveyed to the ship; and Trust immediately repaired to the cook's galley to dry his saturated garments.

"Saved! saved!" cried Miss Trundle, who had followed him—"thank heaven you are saved. Had you not been rescued, I should certainly have drowned with you!"

"Oh no!—I hope not," answered the parson—"self-destruction should never—"

"You don't know—no man knows the devotion of our sex," interrupted the spinster. "We are always ready to die with those we love, and to die *for* them, too."

The parson sneezed.

"It is lucky," said he, in order to change the subject—"it is lucky that I am a good swimmer, otherwise I should probably have been lost."

"Oh, if you had, all my *hopes* would have been destroyed forever," answered Miss Trundle, putting her handkerchief to her eyes. "And—and—and—"

She seemed too much affected to proceed. She bowed her head, heaved a deep sigh, and twisting her eyes toward the minister with a loving glance, glided to the cabin.

Soon after, his garments being dried, the parson walked forward, and seated himself upon the hatch, by the side of the dapper tar.

"If ordered again to do sailor-work, I shall refuse—mildly, but firmly, refuse."

"As you have a perfect right to do, sir," answered Squint, "but I think such refusal will make the captain set you adrift again."

"It matters not," answered Trust; "I can make my way back to the island, where I can wait for some more friendly sail. I will lose no more time that way, than I would in remaining in this vessel, which, it seems, is going to Japan, where it will stay for some weeks before it sails for home."

Daylight was creeping up the eastern sky when the captain came on deck. Seeing the parson seated on the main hatch, he ordered him to go aloft and loosen the main royal.

"I know nothing of loosening sails," answered Trust, "and besides I never went aloft in my life."

"Why, blast ye!" cried Bunt, turning red in the face, "do you disobey me?"

"I am not under your orders," replied the parson. "I know nothing of sailor work. I desire a cabin passage, for which I can pay you when the vessel arrives at New York."

"None of that!" exclaimed Bunt, fiercely, "none of that. I ain't to be taken in by any sich—"

"I perceive that you doubt my word," interrupted Trust, in a mild, but dignified tone of voice. "Such being the case, I shall return to the island, if you will be good enough to have my boat lowered for me."

"Ay, ay, I'll willingly do that," answered Bunt. "No man, unless it's one of my own crew, shall ever say that I kept him aboard my vessel against his own will."

He turned to his first officer, and ordered him to lower the whale-boat.

"Here!" cried Squint, taking from his pocket a little compass, and putting it in the parson's hand, "here is something which will keep you from losin' your way. We're out of sight of land, but you'll see it in the course o' six hours, by steering due east."

"Thanks, my friend, many thanks!" exclaimed the parson. "I hope I may at some future time be able to repay you for your kindness."

"It isn't worth mentioning," replied the dapper tar, "but you'll oblige me by giving my respects to Weldon and his pretty lass of a wife."

"And mine!" cried Bolt, "and tell 'em both that they deserve to be happy, and that I shan't forget to pray for 'em wherever I may happen to be cruising."

The parson promised to do so; then being informed that the boat was ready, he shook hands with the two men and bade them farewell.

Moving to the gangway, he was about to descend into the boat, when he was startled by a shriek proceeding from the

after part of the ship. He turned to see Miss Trundle rushing toward him with outstretched hands.

"Oh, dear! dear! for the love of heaven, parson Trust, what *are* you going to do now?"

"I am about to leave the ship, madam," he responded, "for the purpose of going back to the island."

"The long and short of it is, ma'am, that he's too lazy to work," said Captain Bunt, "and sich bein' the case—"

"This is shocking! this is dreadful!" interrupted the spinster, "turning him away from the ship because he won't do a sailor's work! Oh, dear! oh, dear! what an idea!"

"Good-by, Miss Trundle!" cried Trust, as he scrambled into the boat, "good-by!"

"Hold! hold!" she shrieked, "I will go with you, parson; I must go with you! You never heard—oh, no, you never did, of woman deserting man in the hour of misfortune. Ah! parson! parson! you little know the strength and fortitude of our sex!"

The minister sneezed.

"Madam," said he, "you had better remain where you are. As little as I know of boats it is doubtful that I shall ever succeed in reaching the island!"

"No! no! never will I desert you—one of God's shepherds as you are—in the hour of your adversity. If you must die, I will die with you!" she added, bursting into tears.

"Really, really, madam," said the parson, "I would *prefer*—on your own account, if for no other reason—that you stay in the vessel. You will arrive at New York in five months if you do so, whereas if you go with me to the island, we may have to wait that time before we see a sail."

"Alas! it would kill me to stay long in this heathenish vessel. Oh, dear! oh, dear! I would not do it for the world! Just think of the *impropriety* of the thing; of my remaining nere, the only woman among this rude band of godless men!"

"We won't molest ye, ma'am, upon my word we won't," said Captain Bunt. "We ain't either cannibals or pirates; hows'ever, if ye are bent on going, I shan't offer any objections."

"She will remain with you!" cried Trust. "I feel quite confident she'll remain. Please let go the rope!"

But Miss Trundle, seizing the latter with both hands,

declared that she would sooner die there and then than she would allow one of God's shepherds to drift away upon the broad waters without a companion—a companion of the softer sex—to cheer and comfort him.

"Are ye sure," said Bunt, nudging the elbow of his mate, and speaking in a low voice, "are ye quite sure that she's a woman?"

"Ay, ay, sir, there can be no doubt upon that p'int, though she does look uncommon-like for one of t'other sect."

"Could you *swear* to it, Spike? Could you swear that she's a woman?"

"Yes, sir, I think I could."

"Without perjuring yourself, Spike—mind that—without perjuring yourself?"

"Without perjuring myself!"

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" cried Miss Trundle, rising and tottering to the very edge of the "plankshear." "I shall certainly fall, parson! Hold out your hands to catch me! Quick! quick! I'm going—I'm going!"

And she threw herself plump into his outstretched arms.

At the same moment, Bunt threw the boat-warp from the pin, and ordered his men to brace forward the main yard.

The result was, that boat and ship were soon twenty fathoms apart.

"I will cling to you through sunshine and darkness!" exclaimed Miss Trundle, clutching her companion's arm. "I will not desert you if all the rest of them do."

The parson gently disengaged himself:

"Let me see!" he said, reflectively. "Squint advised me to steer due east. We must get up the sail, Miss Trundle."

After many fruitless efforts, he succeeded in stepping the mast.

"Now, then, madam," said he, "the sail must be loosened."

"Oh, dear!" cried Miss Trundle, "you are quite a sailor!"

As the setting of a boat-sail is a very simple task, the parson, with the assistance of his companion, soon had his sheet secured. The boat, however, was now lying in a position which caused the square piece of cloth to shake in the wind. He seized the steering-oar, and strove to bring the boat's head around; but, unfortunately, though the oar was *moved* rapidly enough, it was done in a manner which prevented the blade

from touching the water. In fact it was worked something like a rolling-pin in the hands of a pie-baker.

"Ahem, Miss Trundle, is she coming round?"

"Oh, dear me!" cried the spinster, "how should I know? I think it *will*!"

And so the parson worked away in the same "rolling-pin" manner, while Miss Trundle stood watching him admiringly.

Suddenly the sail filled and the boat began to move "stern-ways," or backward through the water.

"How now!" inquired the parson, triumphantly, still working the oar, "how now? It seems to me she's moving."

"Oh, dear, yes! it is delightful!" cried Miss Trundle. "We are sailing along beautifully!"

"Verily," said Trust, with a meek smile, "God is good, and has inspired me to work the vessel right!"

"Hear him!" murmured Miss Trundle to herself, "hear this good man. Parson!" she added, aloud, "I will cling to you through every thing. If I drown, you will drown with me. We will both die together!"

"Ahem!" ejaculated Trust. "We must not think of dying now. How does she head, Miss Trundle? You can tell by looking at the little compass which I have placed under the seat, behind me."

Miss Trundle *did* look at the compass, but she couldn't tell how the boat headed, for the points kept changing.

"At any rate we are running at a good 'pace,'" said Trust. "Yes, at a good pace," he added, letting go the steering-oar; "but"—and he looked considerably perplexed—"it seems to me—ah—it seems to me that there's something wrong here. Can you inform me which is the bow and which the stern of this boat, Miss Trundle?"

"Oh, dear! *dear*! How should I know? Both ends of the boat look alike to me!"

"Verily," cried the parson, "that is what puzzles me; the craft being sharp at both ends, it is difficult to tell which is the bow. However, we won't let that trouble us; I guess we are going right."

They were going both right and left. The boat was pursuing a very irregular course; swerving first to one side, and then to the other, like an obstinate pig.

"Oh, how delightful!" screamed Miss Trundle. "We are sailing in curves!"

The parson sneezed.

"We ought to sail steady," said he, and he began to churn the water with his steering-oar.

Then the boat seemed to dance a sort of hornpipe; it performed so many strange evolutions—now darting quickly to one side—now stopping suddenly without any apparent cause; now rolling one gunwale and then another under the water—now whirling completely around—and now plunging its bows beneath the sea—that Miss Trundle lifted up her hands and screamed with terror.

"Keep up a good heart, madam!" cried the parson, still churning at the oar. "I'll get the craft steady in a few minutes."

"No, no!" cried the spinster. "You must not move your oar, while the boat is going! Mr. Squint didn't do that; he allowed his oar to remain stationary."

"Verily, Miss Trundle," answered Trust, with a meek smile, "I thank you for the information. I will keep the oar still and see what result will follow."

The result was not exactly satisfactory, for the boat still pursued its zig-zag course; but the parson hoped that it would "sail steady" before long.

The day wore away and the parson's hopes were not yet realized; the boat had not stopped its eccentric maneuvers.

Miss Trundle clamored loudly for food.

"I must have something to eat!" she exclaimed. "Oh, parson, you will find me something to eat! I am afraid we shall starve!" she added, wringing her hands. "I thought we should reach the island in a few hours after leaving the ship."

"We will see it at daylight," cried Trust, confidently. "I haven't any doubts upon that point."

So saying, he commenced a search for provisions. A few biscuits and a piece of cooked salt meat were found in the stern-sheets, and presented to Miss Trundle.

She accepted them, but complained because better fare could not be procured.

"You should have remained in the ship," answered the parson. "It was against my wishes that you—"

"Don't reprove me!" cried Miss Trundle, bursting into tears, "don't reprove me! *That* is something, which I can't stand. I will cling to you!" she screamed, pouncing upon him and clutching his arm. "I will cling to you through every hardship!"

"May God give you the necessary strength," Trust began, "to enable you to bear up under—"

"Oh, dear! dear! Surely you don't think there's any thing more to bear up under! I shall certainly die if there is! Why, oh! why did you lure me away from the ship? Death is before me, and we will both die together. I will cling to you to the last!"

"Madam," answered the parson, "I am distressed to think that you should, for a moment, hold the mistaken idea that I lured you away from the vessel!"

"Yes, you did—you did!" sobbed Miss Trundle, "and you didn't even think to persuade Captain Bunt to cook and pack up something nice for me before we started! Oh, dear! oh, dear! these hard crackers will be the death of me; but I'll cling to you, yes, I'll cling to you through every thing! You shall never reproach me with fickleness."

The parson made no reply, and a few minutes after he was gratified to hear his companion snore—a proof that she was asleep. Trust exerted himself to keep his eyes open, but his efforts were vain; he was soon nodding his head and dreaming about Miss Trundle and the island.

When he awoke it was broad daylight. The breeze had died away, the sea was as smooth as a mirror. Far away to the eastward he saw land—astern of him he beheld a sail; about a quarter of a mile ahead a raft containing three men approaching the boat.

Trust was evidently startled; he did not like the looks of the men he saw.

"Raft ahoy!" he shouted, with his usual meek smile. "Please inform me who you are and from whence you come."

"We are shipwrecked sailors!" answered Clark.

"Looking for a sail," added Wilkes, "and seeing one—the fellow astern of you—we are making for him."

Miss Trundle now awoke with a start and a scream.

The first object that greeted her eyes was the brown cap,

worn by the convict Wilkes, who stood near the edge of the raft.

She pounced upon the parson and tremblingly leaned against him while she pointed toward the raft.

"That's it!" she gasped, "the *brown cap*; the same one that I saw upon the island."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, indeed; I couldn't mistake the shape of that cap! I'd know it from a thousand. Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

The convict Wilkes heard every word she said.

"Boys," he whispered, "there's one of 'em that will be the means of 'spotting' us, seeing as it seems she spied my cap while I was—"

"Ay, ay," interrupted Clark, "and so it 'ud be mighty inconvenient to have her on board the same ship with us. The best thing we can do is to get hold o' that boat, put off for the vessel ahead of us, and when aboard tell the captain, if he asks about these two 'queer-looking fish,' which we'll put upon the raft—that they're bound for the island and don't want to be picked up, which I think be really the case."

This proposal was received with approbation.

As soon as the raft was alongside of the boat, the convicts sprung into the latter, and ordered Miss Trundle and the parson to step upon the floating platform of spars.

"Verily, this is our raft!" said Trust; "you must have come from the very island we are seeking, my friends; but why do you wish us to leave this boat, which certainly is not your property?"

"We have no time to answer questions!" roared Clark. "Jump upon the raft, both of ye, if you don't want your heads broken!"

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" screamed Miss Trundle, "was ever there a lady so persecuted as I am! Parson Trust, I call upon you for protection from these godless men! There's a certain expression in their eyes as they look at me that fairly makes me shudder! They wish to insult me! I know they do! I know it well; but they shan't tear me from you, parson; no, no, I will cling to you through every thing!"

"Away ye go, on the raft!" cried Wilkes, drawing his knife, "away you go if you don't want to be food for the sharks!"

The parson would have remonstrated; but a rude hand was clapped over his mouth and he was torn from Miss Trundle's clinging grasp and pushed upon the raft.

The spinster was served in a similar manner; then seizing oars, the convicts pulled rapidly for the sail in the distance.

"Oh, good Lord! Oh, dear, dear! What will become of us now?" screamed the spinster, throwing herself upon the clergyman's bosom. "How can we ever get to the land upon this awkward thing!"

"With God's help, we may succeed in doing so!" exclaimed the parson; "there are here plenty of paddles, I perceive, and also plenty of provisions! Our case is far from being hopeless, Miss Trundle."

"This heathenish fruit!" cried the spinster, glancing at the bunches of bananas, "must we indeed be reduced to such eating again?"

"Verily, it is a pleasant sight for a hungry man!" cried the parson, who had not feasted since the previous morning, "and I shall at once partake of the tempting food."

Having made a hearty breakfast, he seized a paddle.

"What are you going to do now?" inquired his companion.

"To paddle the raft toward the island," he replied.

"Oh, no, no!" screamed Miss Trundle, "it will be better to make a signal to that ship astern of us. Perhaps she is homeward bound."

"I'm afraid we may find another Captain Bunt," said Trust, uneasily; "besides which, those three lawless men, who are now almost alongside of the vessel, may give us some trouble."

"On the contrary, they'll be punished!" exclaimed Miss Trundle. "I shall tell the captain how they treated us."

"But," said the parson, "I am anxious to find out whether they have harmed our two friends. For that reason I should prefer to make for the island."

"The ship! the ship!" cried the spinster, "I insist upon it. Oh, dear! dear! please remember the gallantry due to our sex from yours."

"But, madam, haven't *you* any wish to find out—"

"Why should I?" interrupted Miss Trundle, bursting into tears. "Why should I? Haven't they served me in an out-

rageous manner—getting married against my wishes and living on a barbarous island? How can I feel any interest in them, after that?”

“Don’t cry, I beg of you,” said the benevolent parson. “Your wishes shall be obeyed. Perhaps I can persuade the captain, after we shall have been picked up, to send a boat to the island.”

So saying, he fastened his pocket-handkerchief to the end of the paddle and waved the signal about his head. It was soon detected by the watchful mate aboard of the distant craft, which was none other than the *Reindeer*—the one to which Weldon had formerly belonged and from which had become separated.

“Captain Landyard!” cried Dumps, as the skipper, a good-natured looking man with a round face, emerged from the companion-way, “there’s a boat almost alongside of us, with three men in it, and, about a league astern, there’s a raft with two persons on it a-signalizin’ to us.”

He had scarcely spoken when the whale-boat glided alongside. The next moment the convicts were on deck. Dumps eyed them sharply.

“We’re shipwrecked sailors,” said Clark, acting as spokesman; “we belonged to a whaleship that was wrecked off the island yonder, some months ago. We’ve been livin’ ashore ever since.”

“What was the name of your vessel?” inquired the captain, who had been peering keenly over the rail at the whale-boat now under the main chains.

Clark colored and exchanged glances with his companions.

“It was the *Charles Tompkins*,” boldly answered Wilkes.

“The *Charles Tompkins*,” repeated the captain. “I have never heard of any such vessel in the whaling service. How happens it that your boat has the name ‘*SOUTHAMPTON*,’ painted upon the gunwale—eh?”

The convicts betrayed some confusion until Wilkes made the following reply:

“The boat is one we picked up, some time before we were wrecked.”

“Wasn’t there a young man in it—a middling-sized, compactly-built young man with blue eyes?” inquired the captain, “broad shouldered, and wearing—”

"Yes, yes," interrupted Wilkes, "there was. But he went down with the ship when it foundered. We be the only three which succeeded in saving ourselves."

"Ay, ay," whispered the captain to his mate, "I had my suspicions, at first, that these men were the convicts, which the captain of the transport we spoke several months ago, told us had escaped from his vessel in the night; but I've changed my mind. The story they tell has an air of truth about it, d'ye see, since the boat in which they come is r'ally the identical one in which Weldon drifted away from us on the night of the jam with the Southampton."

"Still the yarn may be a trumped-up one," said the mate, "although it's true the sight of that 'identical' boat makes me inclined—"

"I can't help believing the story," interrupted the skipper, "and shipwrecked sailors should be treated civilly. Go forward, lads," he added, "and make yourselves at home."

"And mind that my orders are obeyed," cried the mate. "We're homeward bound; but there's plenty of work to do."

"Before we go for'ard," said Clark, "we'd advise you not to pick up them two on the raft yonder. They don't want to be picked up; they're bound for the island, having deserted their own vessel—in which they were passengers—on account of bad treatment from the captain, who almost starved 'em to death. They told us all about it, d'ye see, sir, when we met 'em afore reaching your craft."

"If they don't want to be picked up, why are they making signals to us?" the mate gruffly inquired.

"Oh—yes—so—so—they are signalizing," stammered Clark.

"Well, p'r'aps they've changed their mind; one of 'em," he added, "seems to be half-witted, and would, I should think, make much trouble aboard of any craft. I wouldn't pick him up if I was captain of a ship."

The mate impatiently motioned to the convicts to go forward. They obeyed, and Dumps remarked that he thought there was a good deal of humbug about "those three men."

"They ain't got a very honest look, that's a fact," answered the skipper, "but," he added, glancing toward the distant raft, "we must not forget them two persons a-signalizing."

Whether they are crazy, drunk or sober, it is our duty to pick 'em up ; so man the boat, Mr. Dumps, and go after 'em."

The boat lying alongside was soon ready to start.

About an hour after, the parson and Miss Trundle stood upon the quarter-deck—the former giving a graphic account of the shipwreck, of the rescue by Harmon Weldon, and of other incidents with which the reader is familiar.

"There!" cried the captain, bringing his fist down upon the capstan, with great force, when the narrator had concluded, "all this proves the story of them three men to be a confounded lie. Ay, ay," he added, solemnly, "I think I see how it is: them three are the escaped convicts, after all. They swum to the island, they kept hid until Weldon and his wife were left by themselves and then murdered one or both of 'em."

"Oh, dear! how shocking!" cried Miss Trundle; "this matter ought to be investigated; it must be investigated! I shall certainly work myself into a fever unless it is."

"As soon as a breeze springs up," said the captain, "I shall work the craft toward the island, and go ashore with Mr. Dumps."

"And I will accompany you," said the parson, rubbing his hands, "most gladly will I accompany you."

"Well," said Dumps, "the first question is, what shall we do with them three convicts?"

"It is our duty to make prisoners of 'em," promptly replied the captain, "they must be handcuffed and confined in the run."

"These had better be stowed in the cabin," whispered Dumps, motioning with his head toward the parson and Miss Trundle; "they'll be in the way in case we have a fight with them chaps, who are sart'inly desp'rit-looking customers."

"There won't be much fighting," answered the skipper; "at any rate, I don't think so. We'll provide ourselves with our revolvers, which I think will soon bring the rascals to terms. The first thing to do is to h'ist up that boat. While you are superintending that work, I'll conduct these two people into the cabin, and when I return to the deck, I'll bring up your pistols and mine too. The steward will come next, with the handcuffs."

So saying, the captain turned to Miss Trundle and the parson, and requested them to follow him. As soon as they were in the state-room, he ordered the steward to procure them refreshments.

A few minutes after, he was again on deck, and, the boat having been hoisted by this time, he gave Dumps a couple of revolvers, retaining a third for his own use.

The four harpooners were then summoned, and ordered to arm themselves with lances and hatchets. They obeyed, after which the whole party, the skipper taking the lead, moved forward in single file.

"They're down in the fore-castle," whispered Dumps, to his superior; "we can muzzle 'em all, one by one, as they come up through the scuttle-way."

"Ay, ay," said the captain; "but the best way to do is to go into the fore-castle after 'em, and muzzle 'em all at once. That we can easily do, seeing as we are the stronger party. There's seven of us, with the steward, to say nothing of the assistance we can have from the watch, if we require it."

"All right; I'll take the lead!" cried the mate, and, springing forward, he quickly descended the fore-castle steps. Before he could turn round, however, a knife was driven to the hilt in the back of his neck, and he fell upon his side with a low groan.

"Ay, ay," roared the voice of the giant, Clark; "we heard ye plottin' there on the quarter-deck, and we are ready for ye all; we'll sell our lives dear if ye attack us!"

"Come on! come on, every man of you!" yelled the infuriated captain; "they haven't any fire-arms—nothing but sheath-knives! We'll soon capture 'em!"

He discharged one barrel of his revolver, in order to keep the convicts away from the steps, and then plunged through the scuttle, closely followed by his men.

All were soon in the fore-castle; pistols and lances were pointed at the hearts of the convicts, who, finding themselves hemmed in by an armed party, were obliged to surrender.

They were handcuffed and thrust into the run. The unfortunate mate breathed his last a few hours after. His body was sewed up in canvas on the next morning, and was launched overboard into its watery grave.

By noon, a breeze having sprung up, the vessel was heading for the island. In a few hours the white sandy beach, fringed with slender cocoanuts, and beyond, the ridges of the higher land, became visible to the naked eye. Parson Trust, who had been for some time leaning over the quarter-rail, in a thoughtful mood, now lifted his head, and, snuffing the fragrance wafted from the isle, started to go forward.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! where are you going now?" shrieked Miss Trundle, as she emerged from the companion-way. "Parson! parson! do you hear me? Where are you going?"

The minister turned, and meekly answered that he thought of making his way to the knightheds, for the purpose of obtaining a good view of the island. He would ask the skipper to loan him his spy-glass, and—

"Oh, no! no!" interrupted Miss Trundle. "You shall not mount those ugly knightheds! You shall not look through the spy-glass! You are no sailor, parson, and the slightest pitching of the ship would cause you to lose your balance and go overboard! You must stay right here on the quarter-deck!"

So saying, she sprung forward and firmly grasped one of the tails of his coat. He gently disengaged himself.

"There is no danger," said he; "I have been on the knightheds of a ship before."

"Alas! alas!" cried Miss Trundle, clasping her hands, "if you *will* go, go you must; but oh! be careful—for God's sake be careful! If you drown, I shall not long survive you! I will cling to you through every thing!"

The parson sneezed; then, with a bow, he left the spinster, and made his way to the knightheds.

"Do you see any person?" he eagerly inquired of the skipper, who was looking through the glass. "Do you see—"

"Ay, ay," interrupted the captain; "there's two people, if I ain't mistaken—a man and a woman—a-standing upon one of them ridges of land."

He passed the glass to the parson, who was not long in discovering the two persons alluded to.

"Yes, there they are!" he joyfully exclaimed. "Weldon and his wife; there can be no other persons upon the island. Thank God! thank God! I am so glad that they have not been injured by those three ruffians!"

"Haul back the main yard!" shouted the captain.

This was soon done, after which the skipper ordered the starboard boat to be lowered and manned. The little craft was made ready in a few minutes.

"I should like to go with you," said Trust, as the skipper was descending into the boat.

"All right; jump in!" cried Landyard.

"No! no!" exclaimed Miss Trundle, throwing her arms around the parson's waist, "you must not go! You shall not go! Perhaps they may persuade you to remain, and then—oh! then what would become of me?"

"Bear a hand, there!" shouted the skipper, from the boat; "bear a hand!"

"You must not stop me, madam—indeed you must not," cried the parson; "the captain is in a hurry."

And quickly disengaging himself from the spinster's arms, he scrambled into the boat. Miss Trundle burst into tears.

"Oh, dear! dear! what a persecuted woman I am!" she sobbed; "even *he* will not take my advice. Hold on! hold on!" she added, as the boat darted from the ship's side; "I will go with you, parson. We must not be separated; I will cling to you through—"

"You'd better go into the cabin, ma'am," interrupted the captain; "you had, r'ally. We'll take you ashore, perhaps, some other time."

The next moment the boat glided round the stern, thus disappearing from Miss Trundle's sight. She mounted to the top of the round-house, however, which afforded her a plain view of the little craft. Sobbing and otherwise lamenting, she watched it until it struck the beach, after which she descended into the cabin.

Weldon and his pretty bride gained the strand just as the skipper and parson Trust jumped from the boat.

"Ho! ho! a fine trick you played us, youngster!" cried Landyard, with gruff pleasantry, as he shook hands with Harmon, "a fine trick! Drifting away from us in a boat, and then getting married upon a lonely island! And so this is your wife," he added, doffing his cap to Minnie. "Blow me, but she's a pretty lass, and I congratulate you on your choice."

One by one the boat's crew stepped up to shake hands with

our hero, and one of them informed him, in a whisper, of the death of his old enemy, Mr. Dumps.

"If he'd lived, I think he'd have insisted upon your being taken back to the ship," continued the sailor; "but the captain's a different man; *he* won't make any trouble of that kind. He always liked you, you know."

"How is my aunt?" inquired Minnie, of the parson.

"Very well, I believe," answered Trust; and he then proceeded to describe the adventures of himself and the spinster since they quitted the island.

He had scarcely concluded when Landyard ordered his men to return to the boat.

They obeyed, and the skipper then turned to Weldon.

"Young man," said he, "is it your wish to remain upon this island, or to return with me to the ship? We are homeward bound."

"I prefer to remain," answered Harmon, "and so does my wife, I believe. Do you not, Minnie?"

"Oh, yes," she answered; "I shall never care to leave the island unless you wish to do so."

"Ay, ay, now, but that's spoken like a true woman!" cried the captain. "You've got spliced to a nice little lass, Weldon, and I hope you'll both be happy all the days of your life."

"Thank you," said Weldon.

"And now," continued the skipper, "as you don't wish to return to the ship, I shall bring you some boards, some spare rolls of canvas, a trunk full of books, a lot of nails, an ax, a saw, a hammer, and a number of other articles which you will find quite useful."

"Oh, no," said Harmon, "I will not trouble you. I—"

"Not a word," interrupted Landyard. "In doing what I propose, I shall only be giving you your due—an equivalent for your share of the profits of the v'yage. The ship is a full ship, remember."

"Verily, you will do wrong if you refuse, young man," said the parson, as he entered the boat.

"I will take no refusal," cried the captain, with a good-humored smile; "if he don't want the articles after they are brought here, he can set 'em adrift."

So saying, the jolly skipper sprung into the stern-sheets of

the boat, and, seizing the steering-oar, ordered the men to give way.

The little vessel was soon alongside of the Reindeer, and the men were then set to work hoisting up some of the contents of the main hold and the steerage.

A cask of sea-biscuit, a barrel of beef, another containing flour, and several bags of dried apples were added to the list of articles which the captain had named to Weldon. They were all conveyed to the shore before night.

"And now," said the kind-hearted skipper, after the last load had been placed upon the beach, and he had shaken hands with both the young people, "may God bless you! Three cheers, my lads!" he added, turning to the boat's crew, "three cheers for Weldon and his bride!"

The men took off their hats, and the cheers were given as the boat left the beach.

Half an hour after, the little craft was alongside; the ship's yards were braced round; the flag was hoisted at the gaff; three more cheers were faintly borne over the waters; then the sails filled, and the vessel went bowling swiftly away from the island, with the water flying from her bows.

The young couple upon the beach watched her until she had disappeared in the shadowy distance; then they turned to seek their hut.

"To-morrow," said Harmon, "I shall go to work to build a house!"

"Oh, how nice!" cried Minnie, "and I will help you."

"Yes," he playfully answered, "you shall help me. You shall weave a carpet for the floor—a cocoanut mat."

"Thank you!" she replied. "We will see who will get to work first, to-morrow morning."

When Harmon awoke, a little after daylight, he saw Minnie sitting near the entrance of the hut, already engaged in the pleasant task of weaving a mat.

"Come, Sir Carpenter!" she cried, laughing, "it is time to go to work upon your house."

After he had refreshed himself with half a dozen kisses and a cold-water bath, Harmon seized a board and commenced to saw it, while Minnie, leaving her mat, set herself to work to prepare a nice breakfast.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

BEFORE leaving the Pacific Ocean, the Reindeer touched at Sydney, Australia. The convicts were there surrendered to the proper authorities, by whom they were heavily ironed and transported to Botany Bay.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Miss Trundle, when the ship was again headed for the open sea, "we have got rid of them heathens! They kept up such a racket in the run, while they were there, that for my life I couldn't sleep more than two hours each night!"

"They were a godless set," answered the parson, "and I, too, am glad they are gone."

"Oh, dear! dear!" cried Miss Trundle, leaning upon his arm, "how long do you think it will take the ship to get home?"

"That depends on circumstances, ma'am!" answered Captain Landyard, who had overheard the remark, "but I can say almost for a sartainty that she'll make the run in less than six months."

"Dear me, I shall die before that time," said the spinster, with a groan. "If it hadn't been for this dear lamb," she continued, squeezing Trust's arm, "I should certainly have been in my grave long ago."

"He's a worthy man, ma'am," said Landyard. "Ay, ay, he's one of your right sort of clergymen, and I hope I shall be able to carry him home in five months, to 'jine' his little flock, about which I often hear him a-talking in his sleep."

"Do you, really?" cried Miss Trundle, her eyes beaming admiration upon the parson. "Do you really hear him—"

"Verily," the parson gently interrupted, "that is quite natural. We often talk in our sleep about those to whom we are much attached."

"Beggin' your pardon, ma'am," said Landyard, smiling

roguishly, "I may add, that often, when I've been passing the closed door of your apartment, at night, I've heard you pronouncing the name of Trust in your sleep, which, I take it, is a proof of the truth of the parson's remark."

"Never!" cried Miss Trundle, blushing deeply, "you must have been mistaken! Oh, dear! what an idea. I—"

"It's quite nat'ral, considering that you two are engaged," interrupted the skipper. "I think—"

"You are mistaken," broke forth the parson, "*very* much mistaken—ahem! Nothing of the kind was ever thought of by me, and I may safely state that Miss Trundle—"

"Oh, dear!" interrupted the latter, "you don't mean to say, after you have given me so much encouragement—after you have lured me from the island—from the other ships; after you have bestowed upon me the many little attentions which are always so significant—oh! *how* significant in the eyes of our sex—after all this, you don't mean to—to—say that you intend to break off our—our—engagement?"

"There never was any engagement between us, madam," said Trust, in a gentle but firm voice. "I never gave you any reason to suppose that I thought of—of—making love to you. Being a married man, I—"

Here Miss Trundle held up both hands and shrieked.

"You a *married* man? Oh, dear! oh, dear! to think how I've been deceived by you! It is shocking—it is terrible! Oh! why—why didn't you tell me this before? *You* a married man—oh, only to think—"

"I believe I spoke of my wife to your niece on the first day of our meeting on board the East Indiaman!"

"But she said nothing to me about it!" cried the spinster, choking down a sob. "I shall never get over this—never! Only to think that all those harmless little coquetries of mine have been thrown away—completely thrown away on this—this—I had almost said—demon!"

And with a heart-rending shriek, Miss Trundle fled into the cabin.

From that moment, she ceased to trouble the parson with her importunities. Learning, by some means or other, that Captain Landyard was a single man, she transferred her "agreeable flatteries" and delicate attentions to him. But the

old skipper, who was a very gruff, plain-spoken man, gave her to understand that he had no intention of "getting spliced," to anybody.

Miss Trundle bravely recovered from this second blow; about a month after the arrival of the Reindeer at New Bedford, she was wedded to a blind man—a millionaire!"

The parson showed the notice of her marriage to his wife one morning while they were looking over some newly-arrived papers, in the little parlor of their cottage home.

We have but a few more pages to add, and these we will devote to the young couple upon the island.

Their house was finished in about a week after the departure of the Reindeer. It was of small dimensions, containing only two apartments; but it was large enough to answer all necessary purposes. The flooring was covered with cocoanut mats, and upon wooden shelves were curious-looking shells, and pieces of coral, tastefully arranged. The front windows of the little building, overlooking the sea, were never closed, except when it rained. Near one of them hung his spy-glass, with which, mounting to the summit of a high ridge of land, Weldon would scan the ocean every morning. The trunkful of books afforded the young people plenty of reading matter; a year, at least, must elapse before the contents of so many large volumes could be finished by two pairs of eyes. Sometimes Minnie would read to her husband, and sometimes both, the wife seated upon the husband's knee, would peruse the same book.

When the nights were clear, they would cruise around the shores of the isle in a long skiff which had been built by the young sailor, and which was so lightly framed that it resembled a boat made of seal-skin. Minnie would sing to Harmon as he plied his paddle, and the birds of the night, hopping among the boughs of cocoanut and bread-fruit trees, would join in the chorus.

They led a pleasant life—this young couple—on their beautiful island in the Pacific Ocean!

Years passed, and still they were contented and happy. The voice of a little child, with brown eyes and golden hair, now made music in their island home. No civilized garb wore he. His form was clothed in a fanciful garment worn

by his fond mother from the mountain reeds and the threads of the cocoanut. A hat made of thin twigs and long grass, braided together, protected his head from the rays of the sun. He was a lusty little fellow, and bravely wandered along the sea-shore or rolled laughingly down the grass-covered sides of the valleys.

He was a stranger to fear. One morning, during a heavy gale of wind, he rushed into the sea, and shouted gleefully, as the waves carried him away upon their lofty crests. His mother, obeying her first impulse, would have sprung after him, if Harmon had not gently pushed her aside and dashed among the roaring waters. Striking out toward the child, he soon succeeded in reaching him; but to return to the shore was impossible. The "seas" carried him rapidly to the reef. Then he plunged both feet into a crevice among the rocks, and firmly holding the child with one hand, seized a bunch of weeds with the other, to which he clung desperately. He feared every moment that the roaring, seething waters would either wash him from the reef, or cause the weeds to become loosened upon the rock so that they would give way. Suddenly, however, he beheld his skiff, guided by his daring little wife, approaching with a velocity that made him shudder, for it was impossible, he thought, that the little craft could escape being dashed to pieces upon the rocks. Bracing himself firmly, he waited until a "counter-sea" came booming over the reef, and then sprung toward the boat, holding the child high above his head with both arms. With wild eyes and pale cheeks, the mother leaned forward to seize the precious burden, and had nearly grasped it when a sea rolled over the heads of father and child, hiding them in its watery folds! She pressed her throbbing brow with both hands; her brain whirled; a half-stifled shriek of agony rose to her lips: she believed both husband and son were lost forever!

The next moment, however, she saw Harmon's hand clutch the bow; above it rose the head of her child!

"Thank God!" she screamed, and darting forward, pulled the loved form of the little Harry into the skiff. Harmon followed a moment later. He seized an oar, and by skillfully working it, turned the boat's head away from the reef.

"The rope! the rope, dear husband!" cried his wife, "all you

have to do is to pull on the rope. I saw that coil lying on the beach, and had my senses about me sufficiently to fasten one end of the line to a cocoanut tree and the other to the bow of the skiff!"

"Noble woman!" cried Harmon; "thanks to your presence of mind, our child is saved!"

He seized the rope, and pulling upon it slowly but steadily, the skiff was soon tossed high and dry upon the beach.

Tears of wild joy rose to Weldon's eyes. From the very depths of his soul he offered up thanks to the mighty Being who had enabled himself and his wife to rescue their child.

On a clear morning, a few months after the incident just described, Harmon saw a sail far away to the eastward, apparently heading for the island.

"I hope we are not going to have troublesome visitors," he remarked to his wife, who stood by his side, holding little Harry's hand.

"Why do you think they will be troublesome?" she inquired.

"I have no reason for thinking so," he answered. "The truth is, my little wife, we enjoy ourselves so much here, that it seems to me as if something *must* occur before long to mar our happiness. In a word, it seems too good to last."

"Oh, no!" she cried, cheerfully. "I have a pleasant presentiment that there is no trouble to come from that ship."

Both watched the vessel attentively, and when she was within a league of the shore, they saw her come up into the wind with her main-topsail aback.

A boat was lowered and rapidly approached the beach.

"Whoever yonder men may be," said Harmon, "we had better go to meet them."

So they made their way to the strand. The boat's keel struck it a few minutes after. A manly-looking fellow sprung from the stern-sheets, and smilingly approached our hero.

"This is Harmon Weldon, I believe," he said, "and this—" lifting his cap, and bowing to Minnie, "is his wife."

"You are right," replied Harmon, frankly returning the cordial grasp of the other's hand. "Your face looks familiar," he added, "and yet I can not remember who you are."

"Captain Bill Choke, at your service," answered the other.

Minnie sprung forward, and grasped his hands.

"You saved my husband's life!" she cried; "Heaven bless you for your noble behavior to us both when—"

"Not another word, madam, if you please!" he interrupted, smiling. "I simply did my duty and no more."

"But why did you go off with those ruffians when they took to the raft?" inquired Harmon. "Why did you not stay upon the island?"

"My principal reason was that we three were leagued together by a foolish oath, made aboard the transport ship. From the moment my sentence was pronounced, however, I had made a firm resolve to lead an honest life after my time was up. That resolution, d'ye see, I have stuck to. When my time was up, I went home, and shipped as mate in a whaler—the vessel you see lying yonder. The skipper was killed, soon after we sailed, by falling from aloft, and I was obliged to take his place; so I am now captain of the craft. Finding myself near your latitude, I determined to pay you a few hours' visit before going to the right whale-grounds."

"A few hours? You must stay with us several days, my friend!" cried Weldon.

"My duty to the owner won't allow it," he answered. "I must take advantage of the fair wind."

And so, after he had admired and petted little Harry to his satisfaction, and conversed a couple of hours with the parents, Choke took his departure.

His boat was soon alongside of the ship; the vessel's main yard was braced forward, and she rapidly bowled along upon her course.

A few more words in conclusion.

Harmon Weldon and his wife, as I learned a few weeks ago, from an old whaleman who saw them during his last voyage, are still living upon the island.

Four children—the eldest is now thirteen years of age—have been added to the population of the "Ocean Paradise."

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